

**MANAGING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF  
FOUNDATION PHASE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS IN MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for  
the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION**

In

EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

At the

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR TS MKHWANAZI

17 JANUARY 2020

## DECLARATION

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

- ❖ Almighty God for the strength and wisdom.
- ❖ My late father, Stofola Paulos Mashiane for teaching me the value of education early in life. Your dream has finally been fulfilled 'Mkandla Thothobezani, Mlayedwa ongana Mlamuleli'.
- ❖ My Mother, Siza Elizabeth Mashiane for the unconditional love and moral support and encouragement and for always telling me, "I want you to study until you become a Doctor of Philosophy" (UMBATHE IJASI EBOMVU).
- ❖ I owe my origins to the Mashiane and Nkabinde families. I am honoured to carry both surnames in equal measure. These clan names are the evidence of support I have received from both families.
- ❖ My spiritual parents Dr E. Zulu and Senior Pastor T. Zulu and Rock of Ages family for prayers, emotional support and word of encouragement.
- ❖ I am truly appreciative of my children, Sphiwe Masanabo, Siyamthanda Nkabinde, Inathi Khumalo, Nkosinathi Ntuli for understanding when I dedicated most of my time to this study. Sphiwe for always telling me "Sesi, I know you will make it and I trust you". Thank you very much Mahlatse Ntuli for taking care of Siyamthanda while I was busy studying.
- ❖ I am grateful for my siblings and their expanded families for the family love they demonstrated during this journey. My late brother Simon Mashiane. Gijimani Mashiane, Mandla Mashiane, Saliwe Mashiane, Xolani Mashiane, Fisiwe Mokwena, Thulani Mashiane, Zanele Mashiane, Nomvula Mashiane, Lindokuhle Msimango, and Mduduzi Mzwakali.
- ❖ The Kabini family, Pastor J Kabini for the word of prophesy (One day you will become a Doctor of Philosophy) and your wife Hlengiwe Zondo-Kabini for the constant love, prayers, support and monitoring.
- ❖ Dr Maria Kekana, Mammah Sibanyoni, Sis Gege Ntuli for encouragement, word of support and prayers.
- ❖ I am also grateful to these family children: Gugulethu Mashiane, Thandolwethu Mashiane, Tumi Mashiane, Enhle Mashiane, Mpilo Mashiane, Boikanyo Ramonyadiwa, Ntokozo Mokwena and Aza Mashiane

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- ❖ My first acknowledgement goes to the Almighty God for providing me with the strength, wisdom and knowledge to complete this study.
- ❖ I thank my supervisor, Dr TS Mkhwanazi for the invaluable advice, support and guidance throughout the study. I thank her for the inspiration, motivation, trust, encouragement, patience and for having confidence in me.
- ❖ Special thanks to Pholile Zengele, the language specialist for editing my work and my friend, Dr Samson Nkambule, for the technical support.
- ❖ My sincere thanks to my fellow colleagues, Dr J Sethushe, Dr MC Kekana, Sindi Dhlamini, Dr L Mudau, Dr N.T Mollo, Dr E Kgwete, Dr V Rajagopaul, Dr S Sithole for the support, advice, inputs and encouragement.
- ❖ My sincere thanks to all my NEEDU colleagues for their words of inspiration and prayers.
- ❖ I thank the Mpumalanga Department of Education for granting me the permission to conduct this study in their schools.
- ❖ I also thank the foundation phase Heads of Departments and foundation phase educators who participated in this study and provided me with the requisite data.
- ❖ Lastly, I convey my sincere gratitude to all individuals who contributed directly or indirectly towards the completion of this study.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study explored how foundation phase heads of departments manage and support professional development in the foundation phase. The study also explored the support these heads of departments receive from external sources in managing and supporting teachers in their professional development. Teachers' perspective about their professional development and support from heads of departments were also explored. A qualitative approach, located in an interpretive paradigm, was adopted. Drawing on various elements of case study research designs, the study focused on six foundation phase HoDs, one Intermediate Phase HoD and five foundation phase teachers from different school settings in one of the provinces in South Africa. Interviews and document analysis were used as the primary tools for data collection. During the interviews, teachers outlined their views on the support provided by both heads of departments and external sources that work to enhance their professional learning.

Through a cross-case analysis approach, the study indicated that teachers appreciated the support received from heads of departments and external sources. The main finding of the study was that there was little support for the heads of departments from external sources. Another finding was that there was minimal support for heads of departments from external sources, predominantly Non-Governmental Organisations. This study indicated the none availability of induction programmes for the newly appointed foundation phase heads of departments.

It is recommended that the Mpumalanga Department of Education organise an induction programme for the newly appointed foundation phase heads of departments. The induction should focus mainly on leadership and management. Lastly, it is recommended that government officials from the district, province and nation provide external support that would benefit the foundation phase heads of departments.

## IRHUNYEZORHUBHULULO (*I-ABSTRACT*)

Ifundorhubhululweli belihlola ngokuzeleleko kobana iinhloko zeminyango yezefundo ziphatha begodu zisekela njani ukukhula kwabosolwazi kusigabasisekelo. Ifundorhubhululweli, liveze isekelo lemithombo yangaphandle, lokuphatha nokusekela abotitjhere ekukhuleni kwabo ngokwelwazi. Indlela abotitjhere babona ngayo ukukhula kwabo ngokwelwazi nesekele abalifunyana eenhlokweni zeminyango yezefundo nalo lihlolwe ngokuzeleko. Ifinyelelo lekhwalitheyithivi eliyi-*interpretative paradigm* ngilo elisetjenzisiweko. Ngokutjhejwa kwemihlobo eyahlukahlukeneko yeemfundosehlakalo, iinHloko zemiNyango ezisithandathu (HoD's) zesigabasisekelo, iHloko yesiGaba (HoD) ngayinye nabotitjhere abasithandathu besigaba sisisekelo, ababuya eenkolweni ezihlukahlukene ngokuhleleka esifundeni sinye seSewula Afrika. Ukuhlunga nokuhlaziywa kwamadokhumende/kwemitlolo ngikho okusetjenziswe ukubuthelela ilwazi elaneleko. Ngesikhathi sokuhlungwa, abotitjhere baveze imizwa yabo ngesekelo ebalifunyana eenhlokweni zeminyango yezefundo nakumithombo yangaphandle ebasiza ukwandisa ilwazi labo kezefundo.

Ngokwefinyelelo le-*cross analysis*, ifundorhubhululweli litjengise kobana abotitjhere bayalithokozela isekelo abalifunyana eenhlokweni zeminyango yezefundo nalelo elibuya kumithombo yangaphandle. Okukhulu okufunyenwe lirhubhululweli, litlhayelo lesekelo eenhlokweni zeminyango yezefundo elibuya kumithombo yangaphandle, kuqaliswe khulu eenhlanganweni ezingasekelwa mbuso (*Non-Governmental Organisations*). Ifundorhubhululweli litjengise godu itlhayelo lamahlelo wokufundisa iinhloko zeminyango yezefundo ezibekwe eenkhundleni ezitjha.

Amahlelo wokufundisa iinhloko zeminyango yezefundo eziqedwa ukubekwa eenkhundleni, ezitjha azokuhlelwa mNyango wezeFundo eMpumalanga. Ukwethulwa kwabo kufanele kuqale zoburholi nokuphatha. Kokugcina, iinsebenzi zombuso ezibuya iiyingini, eemfundeni zenarha yoke zinikele ngesekelo langaphandle elizokuzuzisa iinhloko zeminyango yefundo yesigabasisisekelo.

## IQOQA

Lolu cwaningo luhlola ukuthi izinhloko zeminyango yesigaba semfundo eyisisekelo ziyiphatha ziyesekele kanjani intuthuko yobuchwepheshe esigabeni semfundo eyisisekelo. Lolu cwaningo luhlola nangokwesekela okuvela emithonjeni yangaphandle okutholwa yilezi zinhloko zeminyango ekuphatheni nasekwesekeleni othisha ekuthuthukeni ebuchwephesheni emsebenzini wabo. Kwabuye kwahlolwa ukuthi othisha bakubuka ngeso elinjani ukuthuthuka kwabo emsebenzini wabo nokubheka ukwesekelwa kwabo yizinhloko zeminyango. Kwalandelwa indlela yokubheka ikhwalithi egaxwe emkhakheni wokuchazwa (*interpretative*) kwezinto. Kwacashunwa ezimpawini ezahlukeni zokucubungula amadizayini okucwaninga kokwenzeka ngempela (*case study*), kwagxilwa kuZinhloko Zeminyango eziyisithupha zeSigaba Semfundo Eyisisekelo, eyodwa yeSigaba Semfundo Emaphakathi, nothisha abahlanu besigaba semfundo eyisisekelo abavela ezizindeni zemfundo ezahlukeni kwesinye sezifundazwe zaseNingizimu Afrika. Kwasetshenziswa ukuhlaziya kwama-intaviyu namadokhumenti njengamathuluzi okuqoqa imininingwane noma idatha. Ngesikhathi sama-intaviyu, othisha babenika imibono yabo ngokwesekelwa ababekuthola ezinhlokweni zeminyango nemithombo evela ngaphandle eyayibambisene ekuthuthukiseni ukufunda kwabo ubuchwepheshe.

Lapho kusetshenziswa indlela yokuhlaziya ngokugamanxana kokucubungulwayo (*cross-case*), ucwaningo lukhombise ukuthi othisha bakuthokozela ukwesekelwa abakuthola kuzinhloko zeminyango nemithombo evela ngaphandle. Okubalulekile okwatholakala kulolu cwaningo ukuthi kuncane kakhulu ukwesekelwa ezazikuthola emithonjeni yangaphandle izinhloko zeminyango. Okunye okwatholakala ukuthi kuncane kakhulu ukwesekelwa izinhloko zeminyango ezazikuthola kuvela ngaphandle, ikakhulu eziNhlanguweni okungezona ezikaHulumeni. Lolu cwaningo lukhombise ukuthi azitholakali izinhlelo zokuzingenisa emsebenzini (*induction*) izinhloko zeminyango esigabeni semfundo eyisisekelo,

Kunconywa ukuthi uMnyango Wemfundo WaseMpumalanga uhlele ukuba kube nohlelo lokuzingenisa emsebenzini izinhloko ezintsha zeminyango esigabeni semfundo eyisisekelo. Lokhu kungeniswa kumele kugxile ebuholoni nasekuphatheni. Okokugcina-ke, kunconywa ukuthi izikhulu zikahulumeni ezivela esifundeni, esifundazweni nakuzwelonke zilethe ukwesekela okuzosiza izinhloko zeminyango esigabeni semfundo eyisisekelo.

## **KEYWORDS**

Professional development, Management, Foundation Phase, Teachers, Support, Internal support, External source, Heads of Departments



## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
CI	Curriculum Implementer
CPTD	Continuous Professional Teacher Development
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
FP	Foundation Phase
HoD	Heads of Departments
ISPFTED	Intergrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development
INTERSEN	Intermediate and Senior Phase
IP	Intermediate Phase
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
MDE	Mpumalanga Department of Education
MSSI	Mpumalanga Secondary School Initiative
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit

PAM	Personnel Administration Measures
PMS	Performance Management System
PD	Professional Development
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SG	Superintendent General
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Poor learner performance can be linked to the inadequate training of teachers. It is argued that “the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers” (McKinsey, 2007:1). Teacher development is critical for the improvement of learner performance. Different ethnic groups view teaching as an essential profession. This is in line with the argument advanced by Acar and Yildiz (2016:422) that “Teaching has been considered an important profession for centuries across all cultures”. Teachers should be hired in schools and be developed into competent instructors as supported by McKinsey (2007:1) that “the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction.” I identified the problem and the interest in conducting this study is the lack of internal teacher professional development such as models, professional support or programmes to support the foundation phase teachers and heads of department in the foundation phase. The heads of department is a person that may perform an essential mentoring and supervisory leadership function in order to facilitate the professional development of their colleagues (De Lima, 2008). Different countries use different names for HoDs. In England, the HoD is called the department head. However prior 1994 in Australia, HoDs were usually called subject masters. In South Africa, the term departmental head is used. For this study, the term HoDs will be used. Foundation Phase is the first phase of formal schooling in South Africa, and it starts from Grades R to 3. The study is about managing teacher professional development by the Heads of Departments (HoDs) of the foundation phase teachers in primary schools.

Professional development has various definitions, depending on the context for that particular topic. Teachers can be developed to upgrade their qualifications. In addition, teachers can also be developed by acquiring new skills and knowledge on the subject content as well as job experience and performance. Morake (2014) defines professional development as being highly dependent on the prevailing cultural and socio-economic climate. He further adds that professional development includes on-going workshops, follow-up, study, reflections, observations and assessment that accommodates teachers as learners, recognises the long-term nature of learning, and utilises methods that are likely to lead teachers to improve their practice as professionals (Morake, 2014).

This study aligns itself with Morake's definition of professional development as it focusses on models, professional support and programmes for supporting teachers to improve their teaching skills, professional knowledge, competence and effectiveness in the classrooms than just acquiring new qualifications. In South Africa, different teacher professional development programmes are conducted at national, provincial and district levels. However, the focus of this study is to explore professional support implemented by the primary schools' HoDs, particularly in the foundation phase. This is in line with the assertion by Heystek, Nieman, Van Rooyen, Mosoge and Bipath (2008:166) that: "Professional support has the potential of improving individual performance as well as the culture of the school, by bringing educators together and binding them in a common purpose."

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) gazetted the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), determined by the Minister of Basic Education in terms of the Employment of Educators Act 1998 (the Act) and the regulations. The Act identifies the workloads and job description for every teacher, senior teacher, master teacher, departmental head, deputy principals, principals, as well as office-based educators (DBE, 1998). The amended Act, reviewed in February 2016 as a Consolidation of the terms and conditions of employment of educators determined in terms of section 4 of the Employment of Educators Act, 1998, identified the following roles and responsibilities of the HoDs. These are engaging in class teaching, being responsible for the effective functioning of the department, and for organising relevant extra-curricular activities to ensure that the subjects and education of learners are promoted in a proper manner (DBE, 2016).

In addition, the core duties and responsibilities of the heads of departments include monitoring the work of teachers and learners in their respective departments, to participate in the teacher assessments to regularly review their professional practices in improving teaching, learning and management (DBE, 2016). Thus, the participation of the HoDs in professional practices forms part of professional development. The purpose of this study was to explore the management and support of teachers' professional development by the foundation phase HoDs.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH**

The introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was an unprecedented curriculum reform in the history of South Africa (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). The Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was introduced in 1997, the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS) in 2002, the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) in 2011, and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) in 2012. The current CAPS provide teachers with clear,

concise and unambiguous curriculum and assessment data that enable learners to improve their numeracy and literacy skills effectively (DBE, 2013).

South Africa is divided into nine provinces, namely, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Free State, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Northern Cape, Limpopo, North West and KwaZulu Natal. Each of the nine provinces has its education department (DBE, 2013a:11). Thus, each provincial education is required to “coordinate the implementation of the national framework of support concerning the provincial needs” (DoE, 2005:7). There are 81 school districts in all the provincial education departments in South Africa (DBE, 2013a:11). In the Mpumalanga Province, where this study was conducted, there are four districts, namely: Bohlabela, Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala. A school district is defined as a “geographic area within a province which has been demarcated by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for the education of the province for effective education management delivery” (DBE, 2012a: 14).

The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) was introduced in South Africa in 2003 as an accountability system (DBE, 2003). The purpose of the IQMS was to circumvent the problems experienced with the implementation of the inspectorate system that was “strongly influenced by a judgemental approach and did little to develop a climate of collegiality in schools” (Nkambule, 2010: 3). The IQMS seeks to address the following aspects: formative, developmental, summative, accountability, as well as evaluation. In addition, the IQMS is comprised of three related systems, namely, the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS), Whole School Evaluation (WSE), and Performance Measurement System (PMS).

The DAS is a system whereby a teacher is developed by their supervisor to improve their performance. The WSE is used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the school. The PM is used to evaluate individual educators for salary progression, grade progression and rewards of incentives. In addition to the IQMS which is implemented annually in schools, the DBE introduced the Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) through the South African Council for Educators (SACE) as part of teacher professional development (DBE, 2007).

Furthermore, the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED) for 2011–2025 was launched in South Africa during the teacher development summit held in 2009. The primary outcome of the ISPFTED was to ensure the improvement of the quality of teaching and teacher development (DBE, 2009) It is, therefore, imperative for all relevant stakeholders or role players in the schooling system to implement this prestigious plan. The

importance of the ISPFTED is that it is aligned to goal number 16 of the DBE's Action Plan 2014, which, seeks to improve teacher professionalism in terms of teaching skills, subject knowledge and computer literacy throughout their teaching careers (DBE, 2009).

This study sought to explore how the School Management Team (SMT) members, particularly the HoDs in the foundation phase support and manage teachers to improve their teaching skills and knowledge in the classroom practices.

### **1.3 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY**

The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) was introduced by the DBE to evaluate and develop schools in South Africa. The NEEDU is an independent unit responsible for the administration of schools and reports directly to the Minister of Basic Education. The NEEDU report (DBE, 2013b), based on the school visits conducted in all nine provinces of South Africa, revealed that managing teacher professional development is a challenge in the foundation phase.

The rationale for NEEDU collecting the data in 2012 was to understand the standard of reading for primary school learners and the ability of teachers to teach reading in the foundation phase. The finding reveals that most foundation phase teachers lack support from the school principals, deputy principals and the HoDs on matters of professional development. Thus, poor reading of learners is exacerbated by the lack of school-based support for both teachers and learners in the primary schools of South Africa. To this effect, the NEEDU report (DBE, 2013b) highlights that the best form of support for teachers lies within the school.

Although teachers attend workshops and training provided by the DBE, most of this training does not address the gap of professional development due to the short duration of training or workshops. The NEEDU report emphasised that school-based professional development has the potential to improve reading of learners when teachers in schools share their knowledge and best practices. This was evidenced in the Grade 2 reading, where one teacher exhibited more appropriate pacing and level of cognitive engagement in her class than other teachers in the same school. This suggests that internal staff development is vital for teachers of the same grade to learn from each other through lesson observation, team teaching and mentoring. Such practices were evidenced in a tiny minority of schools (DBE, 2012). This study sought to understand the management and support for HoDs in the FP on professional development to improve classroom practice.

As a NEEDU evaluator in the DBE, I perform professional visits to different schools, particularly in primary schools, special schools, multigrade schools and high schools in South Africa, located in the urban, rural and farm areas. During my visit for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and use of the DBE learners' workbooks, I noticed that some of the professional development models and activities were not well managed in schools. Some teachers participated in the IQMS for individual professional development. On the contrary, most schools did not have professional development models, professional support or programmes to support teachers.

The NEEDU recommended that the DBE should investigate models for effective teacher capacitation (DBE: 2012). This study, therefore, sought to investigate the type of professional development models, professional support or programmes of support for foundation phase teachers in schools. The anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers in the foundation phase receive less professional development support in terms of curriculum delivery, yet they teach all the subjects. To this end, they need more support and professional development in order to improve their teaching skills and knowledge.

#### **1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to explore an understanding of the roles for foundation phase HoDs in managing and supporting teacher professional development. To date, a few studies have been conducted on the roles and responsibilities of the HoDs, particularly on managing teacher professional development in the foundation phase. Nkabinde (2010:10) defines a HoD as "someone who manages teaching and learning activities in a school." Similarly, most participants in the study by Maja (2016) on the SMT members' understanding of their duties according to PAM, agreed that the role of the HoDs is to manage and support teachers. In addition, this study sought to explore the support practices of the HoDs concerning the promotion of professional development for teachers in the foundation phase. It is believed that teachers view and perceive teacher professional development in different ways. Hence, the purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of the support provided by their HoDs. In short, this is a case study of understanding the management of teacher professional development from the perspective of teachers in the foundation phase in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study has the potential to make a significant contribution to all stakeholders in the DBE responsible for teacher development and curriculum delivery in the General Education and Training (GET) band. The education stakeholders may learn and share different strategies for implementing schools' professional development with understanding. The findings will highlight the essential aspects to be considered by the foundation phase HoDs, teachers, curriculum implementers in the districts, deputy chief education specialists in the provincial office, and the DBE. As the school evaluator in the DoE, I will benefit from the study and my professional duties will have a positive impact. I will also benefit from study through interviews and data collection. The study will contribute to the body of existing knowledge by identifying the gaps in terms of training needs from a teachers' perspective.

In terms of policy and practice, the PAM document outlines the roles and responsibilities of HoDs in schools (DBE, 2016). The findings highlighted the implementation of HoDs' roles and responsibilities as stipulated in the PAM document. In this study, most teachers and HoDs participated in an agreed school appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice to improve teaching, learning and management (DBE, 2016).

The School Management Team (SMT) is tasked with the responsibility of managing the delivery of education and performance of teachers in schools. The HoDs form part of the SMT and serve the role of being immediate supervisors for Post Level 1 teachers in schools. In addition, the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (RSA, 1998) highlights that educators in South Africa are categorised according to their post levels. For example, the term, "Post Level 1 teachers", refers to those teachers at the entry-level of their teaching careers. References to international literature use their preferred term

The National Education Policy Act of 1996 gives the Minister of Education a mandate to implement standardised norms and standards in South Africa, which is to direct effective learning and teaching (DBE, 1996). According to the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) statistics, learner enrolment is very high in the foundation phase in South Africa (DBE, 2015a). This suggests that HoDs in the foundation phase have additional management roles and responsibilities to execute their tasks as specified in the PAM document.

The roles and responsibilities of the HoDs in the foundation phase include the supervision of curriculum delivery of many Post Level 1 teachers and control a large number of learners' books

(Nkabinde, 2013). In most primary schools, foundation phase HoDs are full-time teachers required to teach all the four prescribed subjects. They are also expected to supervise all teachers under their jurisdiction in terms of teaching each subject, monitoring teacher professional development and all the other duties outlined in Chapter A, Section 4 of the PAM document. Thus, the challenge facing the foundation phase HoDs is to balance their dual role of teaching and management without compromising either role (Nkabinde, 2013).

Bush (2013) identifies classroom practice and leadership as the two main factors influencing the quality of education and for school improvement. Similarly, instructional leadership is perceived as the most crucial task for principals and other school leaders, including the heads of departments. The PAM document specifies that the heads of departments are tasked with a responsibility of leading the different phases in schools, and are required to act as principals in the absence of the principal and deputy principal in schools (DBE, 2003). Thus, the HoDs are also expected to implement instructional leadership in their respective phases. Hallinger (2005) supports this view by stating that the management of teacher professional development by the HoDs forms part of instructional leadership.

Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018: 1) report that “documented research showed that educator support is inadequate, leaving educators feeling unsupported and ill-equipped to face the challenges presented by the new education system”. Similarly, NEEDU identified overloading of the foundation phase HoDs as the factor affecting the support and management of teacher professional development (DBE, 2013). However, the 2012 NEEDU Report pointed out that the HoDs are the only people capable of providing continuous and frequent assistance to make practical changes (ibid). Du Plessis (2016: 114) supports that “HoDs are developmental in nature in that the intention is to improve teaching, learning and achievement in the department”.

The literature identifies the lack of school-based teacher professional development, including models, professional support or programmes to support FP teachers as the main challenge facing the foundation phase.

## **1.6 RESEARCH MAIN QUESTION**

How do the foundation phase HoDs of Mpumalanga Province manage and support teacher professional development?



### **Sub-questions:**

- What activities of teacher professional development do HoDs engage in to support foundation phase teachers?
- What are the benefits of teacher professional development and its influence on teacher practices?
- How do teachers perceive the support of their TPD by these HoDs?
- What kinds of support do these HoDs receive in order to be able to manage TPD in this phase?

### **1.7 RESEARCH AIM**

- To determine how the foundation phase HoDs of Mpumalanga Province manage and support teacher professional development?

### **1.8 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To explore the activities of teacher professional development that HoDs engage in to support teachers of foundation phase.
- To explore the benefits of teacher professional development and its influence on teacher practice.
- To explore the teachers' perceptions of the TPD supported by their HoDs.
- To determine the support received by HoDs to be able to manage TPD in this phase.

### **1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of the literature review is to acquire insight from the various theories and literature based on this topic or study. A comprehensive review of relevant literature is one of the most essential components of the research (Maja, 2016). This chapter presents the literature review underpinning the phenomenon at the core of this study, namely managing teacher professional development. The review, therefore, includes the literature on matters such as teacher professional development and school leadership. The literature review was drawn from international and national

sources. In order to provide a clear picture of the phenomenon, the first section of this chapter discusses concepts relevant to this study.

### **1.9.1 Defining teacher professional development**

Professional development as defined by Wei, Darling-Hammond and Adamson (2010) is the primary strategy available to schools and the school system to improve the quality of education. This section focuses on “High – quality” professional development and some activities of teacher professional development. According to Wei, Darling-Hammond and Adamson (ibid), the professional consensus is emerging about characteristics of “high quality” professional development. These characteristics include a focus on content and how students learn content; in-depth, active learning opportunities; links to high standards, opportunities for teachers to engage in leadership roles; extended duration; and the collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school, grade, or department.

The activities of TPD to be dealt with in the literature include coaching, mentoring, classroom observation, class visits, collaboration and lesson study. Morake (2014); Heystek, Nieman, Van Rooyen, Mosoge and Bipath (2008:174) argue convincingly that professional development includes “on-going workshops, follow-up, study, reflections, observations and assessment that accommodates teachers as learners”. The next key concept to be discussed is the school leadership.

### **1.9.2 Defining school leadership**

School leadership as defined by Botha ( 2012:41) is “the process of directing the behaviour of others towards the accomplishment of goals and involves elements such as influencing and motivating people, either as individuals or groups, managing conflict and communicating with subordinates”. Following the definition, the focus is on leadership and management, associated with the authority of the site while those who do not have formal administrative roles (Bush, 2008) can exercise leadership. Next, the review looks at the school leadership structure in South Africa.

In South Africa, the composition of SMTs is determined by the provincial department, which decides how many deputy principals (if any), and Heads of Departments (HoDs), each school should have, based on a formula. Principals have little if any, scope to determine the size or membership of their SMT and must work with the deputies and HoDs they inherit (Bush & Glover, 2013). Lastly, the roles and responsibilities of the school principal, deputy principal and HoDs are discussed in terms of the policy and practical situations. In 2008, the personnel administrative measure was gazetted and

revised in 2016. The purpose and the aim of the PAM document are about the roles and responsibilities of SMT members and teachers at the school level. The next section deals with the theoretical framework of the study.

## **1.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study was undertaken from an instructional leadership perspective, and for this study, instructional leadership was examined as practices of leadership functions relating to the professional development of teachers by HoDs. The instructional leadership theory was used, and the focus was on SMT members. The SMT members only include the school principal and the HoDs. The HoDs are regarded as a group of people with formal leadership roles (DBE, 2012). This conceptualisation is acknowledged by the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) in their 2012 National Report. They declare that HoDs are the only teachers who can provide continuous and frequent assistance to make changes in classroom practice (NEEDU, 2013).

The study later looks at the dimensions of instructional leadership skills. The last dimension in developing a positive learning climate focuses on the promotion of professional development. It is followed by the characteristics of instructional leaders, and finally, the study focuses on the contextual factors that aid or impede instructional leadership effectiveness. Horng and Laeb (2010); Mestry and Pillay (2013) indicate that leaders could mentor their teaching staff by observing practice, providing pointed feedback, and modelling instruction when necessary, the influential relationship that motivates, enables and supports teachers' efforts to learn and change their instructional practices. Successful schools are linked to strong instructional leadership (Horng & Laeb, 2010). This study examined the practices of HoDs that support and manage teacher professional development in terms of improving teaching skills, professional knowledge, competence and effectiveness in their classrooms and not acquiring new qualifications. The next section focuses on research design and methodology.

## **1.11 RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1.11.1 Research paradigm**

The study was embedded within an interpretivist paradigm which is defined by Kgwete (2014:101) as "actions and intentions as well as the personal involvement of both the participants and the researcher". Creswell (2009) adds that the interpretivist paradigm is geared towards understanding

the phenomenon from an individual perspective, investigating the interaction between individuals, as well as the historical and cultural context in which people live.

In this study, the management of teacher professional development by foundation phase HoDs was interpreted concerning the support provided by HoDs on teacher professional development and the support received by teachers in terms of acquiring new skills, new knowledge on the subject content as well as job experience and performance. “Interpretive methods yield insight and understanding of behaviour, explain actions from the participant’s perspective, and do not dominate the participants” (Scotland, 2012:12). Through open-ended interviews with HoDs and teachers in the foundation phase, I generated qualitative data.

### ***A. Ontology***

The ontological assumption is defined by Scotland (2012) and Kgwete (2014) as what constitutes reality, the theory of existence, of what is there, why and how. The ontological assumption of this study is that teachers in South African public schools participate in various teacher professional development programmes that are in line with the DoE policies such as coaching, monitoring, lesson observation, class visits, collaboration as well lesson study. TPD activities in South Africa include workshops, follow-up and in-school support, study groups as well as teamwork.

### ***B. Epistemology***

The epistemological assumption, as defined by Kgwete (2014:101), is concerned with knowledge, knowledge generation, and how knowledge can be acquired and communicated with others. Kgwete (2014) adds that there must be an understanding of the issues from the point of view of those being investigated and their circumstances. The epistemological assumption of this study was through interactions with experienced foundation phase HoDs, who manage teacher professional development in their schools and foundation phase teachers, who corroborate or refute the realities. Document analysis was utilised in the process of knowledge generation about how HoDs in the foundation phase support teachers in terms of their professional development.

## **1.11.2 Research design**

A qualitative research approach was used to answer the following research question, how do the HoDs in the foundation phase support and manage teacher professional development? In a qualitative study, a researcher enquires about such topics as how people experience an event, a series of events, or a condition (Agee, 2009). Qualitative research designs or approaches are as diverse as qualitative

data sources (Mathipa & Gumbo, 2015). Qualitative research design and approach was selected against the quantitative approach because the qualitative approach is flexible enough to make adjustments during data collection, where supplementary questions can be formulated during the collection process to collect additional data. Whereas, the quantitative approach is not flexible and is usually difficult to follow on promising intuition (Mathipa & Gumbo, 2015).

The study employed a qualitative case study research method and procedures to investigate the management of teacher professional development in the foundation phase by HoDs. Qualitative research's primary goal is to develop knowledge of the human condition and stimulate enhanced self-understanding (Kgwete, 2014:98). Through this study, I was able to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers and HoDs on teachers' professional development. This also promotes a better understanding of the researcher and the participants. Kgwete (2014) adds that different research designs have their meanings, but the qualitative research method is excellent because it assists researchers to understand the meanings people attach to social phenomenon. The above statement by Kgwete was supported by Agge (2009 ) when she indicated that, qualitative inquiries involve asking the types of questions that focus on the why and how of human interactions

### **1.11.3 Research methodology**

A case study was selected as the most appropriate design for this study. Rule and John (2011) define a case study as a popular approach that allows researchers to develop and present an in-depth view of a particular situation, event or entity. McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 24) support the above statement by Rule and John (2011) that a case study examines a bounded system, or a case, over time in-depth, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting. In this study, HoDs and teachers' perspectives on the management of professional development were the phenomenon examined in-depth. In the FP, eight individual experienced HoDs and four experienced teachers were selected in four different primary schools in the Mpumalanga Province, Nkangala District.

Yin (2014) identifies six sources that could be used as evidence in a case study; the following sources are, namely: documents, direct observation, interviews, archival records, participant observation and physical artefacts. In this study, interviews and document analysis were used as the source evidence, allowing data triangulation. In this study, the units of analysis were individual Grade 1 to 3 experienced teachers and FP experienced HoDs, respectively.

## **1.12 SAMPLING SELECTION**

### **1.12.1 Setting selection**

Four primary schools were identified in Emalahleni Circuit 2, Nkangala District and Mpumalanga Province. All four schools are no fee-paying schools and are regarded as feeder schools to excellent performing high schools in that circuit. The four schools in the sample represent the same population from various socio-economic backgrounds drawn from the same geographical locations. The schools are situated in the same townships of Emalahleni and accommodate learners from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Research conducted by Du Plessis on South African HoDs on their role in teacher development (2016), confirmed that unexpected patterns which were uncovered, challenge the assumption that teacher development is more likely to occur in well-resourced schools than in under-resourced schools. Hence, the study sought to understand ‘how’ teacher professional development was managed in under-resourced schools. As indicated above, most ex-model C schools are well resourced in terms of buildings, facilities, human resources as well as curriculum and management resources. However, some under-resourced schools lack some of the facilities mentioned above. This study explored the support received by teachers from HoDs, from under-resourced schools.

Permission to conduct the research was requested from the Head of the Mpumalanga Department of Education and participating schools. A copy of the permission letter was sent to the participating circuit, as well as participating schools. I assured the SMT and SGB members that my visit to schools would not affect teaching and learning at all. Mostly in the foundation phase classes, learners knock off earlier than other grades. I used that opportunity to interview teachers, as soon as learners left for home and teachers were able to attend the interview sessions.

### **1.12.2 Participation selection**

Two experienced HoDs in the foundation phase per school, and one experienced foundation phase teacher per school were selected; in total, 12 participants were selected. The focus was on any experienced HoDs as well as any experienced Grade 1 to 3 teacher. The HoDs and teachers had a minimum of three years of experience teaching in the foundation phase.

The school principal assisted in selecting Post Level 1 teachers. The rationale for asking the principals to select the HoDs and Post Level 1 teachers was to avoid selecting “quiet, uncooperative

or inarticulate individuals” (Shenton, 2004:65). The HoDs were identified by their positions as Post Level 1 teachers based on their knowledge and requisite experience on matters of support in their schools. Thus, all the participants selected were knowledgeable about the subject being studied; hence they were able to give in-depth information that may assist other under-resourced schools that are unable to implement TPD.

The experienced HoDs and teachers from identified four under-resourced schools were interviewed in their respective schools. The schools provided venues for interviews but HoDs offices, depending on the availability, were ideal as interview venues for both teachers and HoDs.

### **1.13 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

The study employed two different methods of formal data collection strategies, namely: interviews as well as document analysis. The two types of methods are discussed below:

#### **1.13.1 Interviews**

In-depth interviews were utilised which are defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) as open response questions for participants' meaning; how individuals perceive their world and how they explain or understand essential events in their lives. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:44) add that “Interviews may be the primary data collection strategy or a natural outgrowth of observation strategies”. In this study, I sought to understand how the HoDs in the foundation phase support and manage teacher professional development.

Semi-structured interviews were used for this study. A semi-structured interview is the type of interview that usually uses an interview protocol that acts as a guide and starting point for the interview process (Hays & Singh, 2012). These researchers also indicate that in the semi-structured interview, the sequence and pace of interview questions could change, and there is no specific protocol to be followed. These kinds of interviews also allow probing questions for further elaborations and clarifications (Hays & Singh, 2012). These researchers add that in probing participants, voices are essential and rich but not because they [participants] are doing something wrong. Teachers and HoDs were interviewed, and probing questions were asked for further elaborations and clarifications.

I interviewed all HoDs and teachers in their respective schools, one session of interviews per school. Individual teachers' interviews consisted of 5-10 questions. Two examples of questions asked to

teachers and HoDs were 1. What kind of support do teachers receive from HoDs in terms of professional development? 2. Do HoDs receive support from other SMT members on the implementation of PD? Interviews typically lasted 30 minutes to 1 hour. In some cases, more than one-hour was expected (Singh et al., 2012). All interviews were voice recorded with permission from the participants.

### **1.13.2 Documents analysis**

Official documents or instruments are used in schools for several reasons. Some schools use instruments or tools for managing, monitoring and evaluations, which are noted by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:360) as “internal papers used for informal or formal perspective within the organisation”. The tools such as the school improvement plan, subject improvement plan and the WSE document commonly ask different intervention strategies that are used by teachers and SMT members for proper curriculum management.

The three kinds of tools mentioned above were collected and analysed. The internal collected documents assisted me in understanding how the HoDs conduct TPD in schools. This statement is supported by McMillan and Schumacher (2014) by indicating that internal documents can show the official chain of command and provide evidence of the leadership style and values. Schedules such as professional development programmes on when and how teachers are developed were also collected and analysed.

I was also interested in analysing the tool or subject improvement plan as well as the schedule or professional development programme with teachers’ names that are used by the HoDs to support teacher professional development, as the guide on how professional development is managed in schools.

### **1.14 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data were collected from the interviews, documents and were subjected to content analysis. Leedy and Ormrod (2013) define content analysis as a detailed and systematic study of the contents of a particular set of materials to identify patterns, topics or biases. The process involved coding, categorising, looking for recurring patterns, similarities, inconsistencies or contradictions.

Each data segment or unit was considered against the overarching question of how HoDs in the foundation phase support teacher professional development and how teachers experience that support



(Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Codes were then assigned to the specific units or segments of related meaning that were identified in the transcripts. The codes were categorised to establish the emergent nature of themes, trends and patterns that were cross-referenced with the research questions to ensure that I did not lose focus. The analysis process was further informed by probing questions aimed at identifying thematic relationships between the various categories. The qualitative analysis process was concluded with a description of the thematic relationships and patterns that emerged. The categories, patterns and emerging themes were then linked to the research questions and discussed in relation to the relevant literature.

## **1.15 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness, as indicated by Guba (1981), entails credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability as aspects of trustworthiness in qualitative studies. He further explains that there are actions to be implemented that lead to credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

### **1.15.1 Credibility**

Credibility refers to the truth of the data or the participant's views and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2012). "Credibility is enhanced by the researcher describing his or her experiences as a researcher and verifying the research findings with the participants" (Diane, 2014:89). Triangulation was used to enhance the trustworthiness of this study. Credibility is also increased by making use of triangulation, where more than one research method is used to collect data (Shenton, 2004). Triangulation in this study was achieved by the use of interviews and documents' retrieval.

The verification of the transcribed data of the teachers' interviews improved the credibility of data in the study. To ensure credibility, I utilized prolonged engagement and member checking. HoDs and teachers were visited as much as possible to ensure prolonged engagement. In this study, during the data analysis, I gave participants the interview transcript to check for accuracy and appropriate interpretation of what they said.

### **1.15.2 Dependability**

Dependability refers to the constancy of the data over similar conditions (Polit & Beck, 2012; Tobin & Begley, 2004). This can be achieved when another researcher concurs with the decision trails at each stage of the research process. Through the researcher's process and descriptions, a research

study would be deemed dependable if the findings were replicated with similar participants in similar conditions (Koch, 2006). In this study, HoDs and teachers were interviewed as similar participants in similar conditions.

### **1.15.3 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data represent the participants' responses and not the researcher's biases or viewpoints (Polit & Beck, 2012; Tobin & Begley, 2004). According to Diane (2014), the researcher can prove that it is conceivable by describing how conclusions and explanations are drawn and that the results are derived directly from the data.

In reporting qualitative research, this can be exhibited by providing rich quotes from the participants that depict each emerging theme.

### **1.15.4 Transferability**

Transferability refers to findings that can be applied to other settings or groups (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Polit & Beck, 2012). A qualitative study has met this criterion if the results have meaning to individuals not involved in the study, and readers can associate the results with their own experiences. Researchers should provide sufficient information on the informants and the research context to enable the reader to assess the findings' capability of being "fit" or transferable.

Since this was a case study with a small sample, the findings were not meant to be generalised to the larger population of teachers and HoDs, but rather the insight generated can be applied to cases of a similar nature. This implies that the findings of this study might apply to other teachers and HoDs from other primary schools in the same vicinity as well as the teachers and HoDs who participated in the study.

## **1.16 VALIDITY**

Validity, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001) refers to the degree to which the explanation of the phenomena corresponds with the reality of the world. The study used a valid questionnaire to schools, as well as interviews and document analysis that were able to measure the school-based professional development and teachers' performance in their respective grades.

In qualitative research, “claims of validity rest on the data collection and analysis technique” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:407). I used in-depth interviews and document analysis in collecting data. A combination of any of the ten possible strategies such as prolonged fieldwork, multimethod strategies, participant verbatim language, mechanically recorded data, participant researcher and member checking were employed to enhance validity (Mc Millan & Schumacher, 2001:407). For this study, mechanically recorded data and member checking were employed.

### **1.17 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Understanding ethical and legal responsibilities in conducting research is essential because most educational research deals with humans (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A letter from the University of South Africa Ethics Committee, as a notification to continue with the fieldwork, was obtained. I considered voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants before conducting the study. I was open and honest about the purpose of the study, as indicated by my McMillan and Schumacher (2010) that researchers should generally be open and honest with participants on all aspects of the study.

Informed consent was obtained from the Mpumalanga Department of Education, school principals and participants. In order to obtain the teachers, HoDs’ consent and voluntary participation, the purpose and the goal of the research was explained to them. The participants were made aware that they may withdraw from the research at any time, and that confidentiality and anonymity would be observed during and after the research was concluded.

### **1.18 CHAPTER DIVISION**

To begin the first chapter, I elaborated on the nature of the research problem and set forth the argument for studying it. I set the background by providing a detailed discussion of the historical overview of the management of teacher professional development in the foundation phase by HoDs, especially the under-resourced primary schools. With these HoDs and teachers in mind, focus areas presented in this dissertation and the research questions were addressed. The rationale for undertaking this study is provided.

Drawing from the relevant literature in South Africa and developed countries, the second chapter offers a conceptual framework on teacher professional development, school leadership, as well as instructional leadership, in a context of in-school specific conditions that influence teacher professional development. These conditions include teachers’ knowledge, skills and professional

background, school leadership support, and the school contexts. Within the literature on teacher professional development, I focus mainly on the management of teacher professional development in the foundation phase by HoDs. The third chapter focuses on the theoretical framework that is instructional leadership theory.

The fourth chapter describes the design and methodological approaches that I used to conduct my research study. The fifth chapter offers the main findings, which comprise the discussion on teachers' understanding of their professional development, what shaped that understanding, and what types of professional development support these teachers need and believe they need. Finally, the sixth chapter provides concluding reflections about the findings, design, and contributions of the study to the existing scholarship and practice.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the literature review is to acquire insight from the various theories and literature based on the topic of study to be undertaken. A “thorough review of the relevant literature is one of the most essential components of research” (Maja, 2016:19). This chapter presents the literature review underpinning the phenomenon at the core of this study, namely managing teacher professional development. The review will, therefore, include the literature on matters such as teacher professional development and school leadership.

This section will also focus on teacher professional development activities that are currently implemented in South Africa. The following examples of professional development activities will be explored: coaching, mentoring, classroom observations, class visits, lesson study, as well as collaboration. Teacher professional development activities refer to a wide range of activities in which teachers participate and play an active role (Borko, Jacobs & Koellner, 2010). Other professional development activities are discussed: workshops, follow-up and in-school support, study groups as well as teamwork. The study also explores professional learning communities.

The next section of this review focuses on the critical concept of school leadership. First, the review in this section looks at the definition of school leadership; then it distinguishes between leadership and management. Finally, the review looks at the school leadership structure in SA as well as their roles and responsibilities. The literature review was drawn from international and national sources. In order to provide a clear picture of the phenomenon, the following section starts by defining the concepts of teacher professional development.

#### **2.2 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

There is no one size fits all definition for the term school leadership. The concept is defined in various ways by different scholars and authors in leadership and management. School leadership as defined by Botha (2012:41) is “the process of directing the behaviour of others towards the accomplishment of goals and involves elements such as influencing and motivating people, either as individuals or groups, managing conflict and communicating with subordinates”. For schools to provide the best possible education for their learners, it requires effective leaders

and managers (Bush, 2007). According to Bush (ibid), teachers need to be trained and committed in their duties with the support of the highly effective principal and other SMT members. Botha (2012:47) concludes that “the over-riding challenge for tomorrow’s school leaders is to help articulate and implement an educational vision for a new South African society”.

School leaders are developed differently depending on the district, province and country. In England, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) trains leaders. The college’s main aim is to: ‘provide a single national focus for school leadership development, research and innovation’ (NCSL, 2001: 9). The excellent part of NCSL is that it has developed all the categories of the leadership team, in its short life span (Bush, 2008). The leadership team in the SA context may include and not limited to the principal, deputy principal, senior teacher and HoD. Bush (2008: 279) argues that the “advent of NCSL has fundamentally changed the landscape of leadership and management development in England”.

In South Africa, for example, the first specialist leadership centre is called the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG). The focus of MGSLG is to train school principals on school leadership. Most principals were trained on the new national qualification for principals called the ‘Advanced Certificate in Education: School Leadership’. However, unlike NCSL, which focuses on training the management team, the focus of MGSLG is only on school principals and foundation phase HoDs trained on ECD practitioners support. There is little evidence on the training of other SMT members, such as deputy principals and HoDs. School leadership is mainly based on training and developing school leaders, focusing on leadership and management. In my view, leadership and management are regarded as the core business of school leaders and other SMT members. The next sub-section distinguishes between leadership and management.

### **2.2.1 Defining leadership and management**

Different authors define the concept of leadership and management differently, “the concepts of leadership and management overlap with each other and with the related notion of administration” (Bush, 2008:272). “Management is associated with positional authority while leadership may be exercised by those without formal management roles” (ibid). In this study, HoDs in the foundation phase are regarded as managers for the phase; hence they [HoDs] will manage the professional development of teachers in the phase. HoDs will play the role of being HoD as per their appointment and the role of being the manager, managing and supporting teachers in the foundation phase.

According to Heystek et al. (2008:7) “leadership and management are the functions of the person who is the head of a school”. They added, “Leadership and management are practised in schools as organisations with unique characteristics” (ibid). I concur with Bush (2008) and RSA (2016) and wish to add that HoDs can also play a role of leadership and management in the specialised subjects or phases they are heading. However, in most schools, HoDs in the foundation phase are not subject specialists but are responsible for the entire subjects taught in the phase. Some HoDs are expected to lead and manage the phase and report to the school principal as the head of the school about learner performance and other activities pertaining to the phase. Hoyle and Wallace (2005) found notable differences between leadership and management, in which they are the same, but they state that people are led, and processes are managed.

In this study, HoDs are seen as leading teachers in the foundation phase and managing the processes of teacher’s professional development. Furthermore, HoDs ensure that all activities of TPD are managed according to the agreed schedule between the teacher and the HoD. In the same vein, teachers will be able to perceive the support they receive from the HoDs about their professional development. According to Bush (2007:1), “leadership and management have to be centrally concerned with the purpose or aims of education”. However, Heystek et al. (2008:8) argue that in “South Africa leadership roles tend to be followed than management as the preferred concept for the activity of the school or school department”.

The next sub-section deals with the definition of the term leadership.

### **2.2.2 Defining leadership**

Leadership, as defined by Law & Glover (2000:13), is “frequently seen as an aspect of management, with born leaders being characterized as charismatic individuals with visionary flair and the ability to motivate and inspire others”. For schools to provide the best possible education for their learners, they require effective leaders and managers (Bush, 2007). According to Bush (ibid), teachers need to be trained and be committed in their duties with the support of the highly effective principal and other SMT members. In this study, HoDs in the foundation phase are regarded as highly effective leaders for the phase, supporting teachers in their professional development. Teachers will be observed in their classroom teaching and later be trained and developed to be competent in their skills and content knowledge. Botha (2012:47) concludes that “the over-riding challenge for tomorrow’s school leaders is to help articulate and implement an educational vision for a new South African society”.

Leadership is conceptualised by Bush (2008) as the influencing of others' actions in achieving desirable ends; this definition is similar to that found in Botha (2012) who writes that leadership directs the behaviour of others to accomplish the desired goals. Bush (2008) adds that leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations and actions of others, frequently they initiate change to reach existing and new goals. The above definition takes into account the actions of leaders in shaping other people to reach their goals. In this study, HoDs in the foundation phase develop, motivate and encourage teachers to participate in professional development activities to be better teachers in their content skills and knowledge.

In his view, Bush (2008) asserts that leadership takes much ingenuity, energy and skills. "Leadership is increasingly linked with values; leaders are expected to ground their actions in clear personal and professional values" (Bush, 2003; 2008:227). At the school level, all SMT members are expected to lead by example in everything that they do, firstly, by coming to school every day and on time, secondly, by adhering to all policies and all regulations as outlined by the Department of Education (DBE, 2003). In my view, teachers and learners copy and follow the right actions and deeds of their leaders, SMT members. On the other hand, Heystek et al. (2008:7) conclude that "the leader is more inclined to open communication and risk-taking, and less restricted by prescribed policies". HoDs will be seen communicating with their teachers on the management and processes of their professional development activities such as class visits and lesson observation will be communicated with respective teachers and will be planned for ahead.

In my experience as a teacher and the HoD in the foundation phase, teachers will only comply when there is proper open communication between them and SMT members. In my opinion, without proper communication and leadership in schools, there will be no school improvement in terms of learner achievement. Similarly, Bush (2007:401) asserts that "school improvement ultimately depends on school leaders accepting their responsibility for developing learning". According to Bush (2008), there are three main characteristics of leadership: leadership as influence, leadership and values as well as leadership and vision.

Leadership as conceptualised by Early and Weindling (2004); Bush and Glover (2013) is the activity of leading people, which implies that things are done through people, with the emphasis on relationships, communication, motivation and emotional intelligence. The task of the provincial and district officials is to develop the capacity among school leaders to maintain an effective system of in-school professional development (DBE, 2012). In this study, HoDs expected support either from other SMT members as well as district officials who are dealing specifically with the foundation



phase curriculum. The support received by HoDs will enable them to support teachers in their professional development.

In his view, Bush (2007) concludes that “leadership can be understood as a process of influence based on clear values and beliefs and leading to a ‘vision’ for the school”. In this study, HoDs in the foundation phase may be responsible for cascading the importance of the school vision to the foundation phase teachers and learners, respectively, as the leaders in the foundation phase. The next sub-section focuses on the definition of the term management.

### **2.2.3 Defining management**

Managing is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organisational arrangements while managing well often exhibits leadership skills; the overall function is towards maintenance rather than change (Bush, 2008). In the same way, HoDs will be seen managing teacher professional development to maintain the status quo; in other words in managing well, HoDs will keep in existence the processes of professional development every year. The schedule for managing TPD is drafted by both teachers and HoDs and agreed upon by both parties.

Similarly, management can be linked to implementation or technical issues, as well as systems and papers (Bush, 2003). When the implementation of teacher professional development is planned by both HoDs and teachers, maintenance is easily managed. Management refers to the “more structured approach of working within the confines of the rules, regulations and boundaries provided in a school situation” (Early & Weindling, 2004:5). In my view, HoDs are perceived as managing teachers and learners in the phase as part of rules and regulations from the Department of Education. In the same way, management might be regarded as none negotiables, in other words, teachers and HoDs are expected to work within the rules and regulations without any excuses (SASA, section 16A (2) (a) (i) - (vi), 1996).

In addition, Bush (2008:283) concurs with Early and Weindling (2004) that “management is associated with positional authority while leadership may be exercised by those without formal management roles”. It is a fact that teachers can also be regarded as managers in their classrooms, as they manage learners daily with different aspects such as curriculum and pastoral care. According to Bush (2007), the central goal of management is to promote effective teaching and learning in schools; therefore, proper management is an as essential aspect of any education service. It is suggested that the HoDs in the foundation phase may promote effective teaching and learning by managing and supporting teachers in their professional development.

Bush (2007) further argues that the quality of management in schools may be judged by the quality of learners they produce. In the same way, when HoDs manage and support teachers well in the foundation phase, maintain the process well, give feedback to teachers on their development, quality learners may be produced. Bush (ibid) concludes that management in education is not an end in itself. In this study, the support received by foundation phase teachers in their professional development, as well as the support received by HoDs from the district, may lead to proper teaching, and the results may improve in schools. The next sub-section reviews the school leadership structure in South Africa.

### **2.3 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The term leadership had become the preferred term to describe the activities of school heads, college principals, leadership teams and middle managers (Bush, 2008). The Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document (DoE, 1999) and (RSA, 2016) outlines that the leadership structure in SA consists of the principal, deputy principal and HoDs. Their [SMT] function is to ensure that the school is operating efficiently and effectively (DBE, 2003). According to the PAM document (RSA, 2016), firstly, the school principal is the head of the school, representing the HoD or Superintendent in the province. Secondly, the deputy principals in schools are seen as assisting the school principal and acting on behalf of the principal when absent or to deputise for the principal during their absence from school. Lastly, HoDs are expected to control the work of the teachers and learners, as well as to act on behalf of the principal and deputy principal during their absence from school.

It should be noted that the composition of SMTs is determined by the provincial department, which decides how many deputy principals (if any), and Heads of Departments (HoDs), each school should have, based on a formula. Principals have, little if any, scope to determine the size or membership of their SMT and must work with the deputies and HoDs they inherit (Bush & Glover, 2013). In his view, Mahlangu (2016:171) alludes to the fact that for a “school to achieve effectiveness and improvement in academic achievement, school leadership should no longer reside in a single person or certain administrators, it needs to be distributed among major educational players across all levels”. In support of Mahlangu (2016), school leadership needs to be distributed to principals, deputy principals, HoDs as the leadership structure of the school.

In my opinion, HoDs are regarded as the first point of contact in schools for teachers and learners. In other words, teachers and learners consider HoDs as their first leader before submitting their matters to the deputy principal or the principal. In most schools, HoDs report to the deputy principal and the

deputy principal consolidates all the matters from the HoDs and report to the school principal. According to the PAM document (RSA, 2016), HoDs may act on behalf of the principal in the case of the small school or in the absence of both the principal and the deputy principal on that day. The next sub-section reviews the roles and responsibilities of SMT in South Africa.

### **2.3.1 SMT roles and responsibilities in South Africa**

In South Africa, the personnel administrative measure was gazetted and revised in 2016, the purpose and the aim of the PAM document (RSA, 2016) is to outline the roles and responsibilities of SMT members and teachers at the school level. In the next sub-section, the roles and responsibilities of the school principal, deputy principal and HoDs are discussed in terms of the policy (RSA, 2016) and practical situations. In the study conducted by Bush and Glover (2012) in Mpumalanga on SMTs in South Africa, a significant minority (17) of respondents provided unprompted open comments suggesting role confusion and ambiguity. Whereas, some (9) also complained about role overload arising from departmental management and whole school SMT responsibilities. Exploring the roles and responsibilities of SMT members in this study enabled me to discover whether the roles are in line with the policy, or they are merely thumb sucked.

#### ***2.3.1.1 The role of the school principal***

The school principal is the head of the school, representing the Head of Department (HoD) or Superintendent General in the province. Depending on different provinces, the words Head of Department (HoD) and Superintendent General are used interchangeably. School principals are required to “regularly visit teachers in their classrooms to provide support, monitor their progress in providing quality teaching and learning and inform the school’s professional development priorities” (ELRC, 2008: 53). Literature reveals that internationally as well as in South Africa, school principals are bombarded with a lot of paperwork and new policies from academics, officials and consulted. All these people come with the aim of teaching school principals how to lead and manage their schools (Bush, 2007).

According to the PAM document RSA (2016), duties and responsibilities of the school principal are individual and varied, depending on the approaches and needs of the particular school. They include but are not limited to, the following: Firstly, “to be responsible for the professional management of a public school as contemplated in section 16A(3) of SASA. Secondly, to carry out duties which include, but are not limited to the implementation of all the educational programmes and curriculum activities, such as the management of all educators and support

staff, the management of the use of learning support material and other equipment. Thirdly, the Act also indicates the performance of functions delegated to him or her by the HoD or SG in terms of SASA; like the safekeeping of all school records; and the implementation of policy and legislation (SASA, section 16A(2)(a)(i)-(vi), 1996) to give proper instructions and guidelines for timetabling, admission and placement of learners” (RSA, 2016:32).

Apart from the PAM document, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has developed a Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship (‘the standard’), “which fully defines the role of school principals and the key aspects of professionalism, image and competencies required. This policy also addresses professional leadership and management development needs” (RSA, 2005:3). The critical areas referred to in the standard are in line with the core purpose and responsibilities of the principal as set out in Sections 16 and 16A of the South African Schools Act, (No 84 of 1996, paragraph 4.2) of Chapter A of the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM).

Few roles of school principals are discussed following the standards for SA school principalship (RSA, 2016:13). Firstly, “the principal works within the SGB, the SMT and with parents in the school’s community to create and implement a shared vision, mission and strategic plan to inspire and motivate all who work in and with the school and to provide direction for the school’s on-going development”. Secondly, the principal working with the SGB and SMT is “responsible for ensuring the quality of teaching and learning in the school, and the principal must establish and maintain effective quality assurance systems and procedures within the school and is accountable to a wide range of stakeholders” (RSA, 2016:13). In this study, the school principal is seen assisting, inspires and motivates the HoDs on their roles of managing teacher professional development to ensure quality teaching and learning in the foundation phase.

### ***2.3.1.2 The role of deputy principal***

Deputy Principals in schools are seen as assisting the school principal and acting on behalf of the principal when absent. In their view, Petrides, Jimes and Karaglanı (2013:75) argue that “despite the emerging emphasis on a more balanced distribution of responsibility, the literature has historically overlooked the specific role of the assistant principal”. The terms assistant principal and deputy principal are used interchangeably. In the study conducted by Petrides, Jimes and Karaglanı (2013), findings revealed that while participating assistant principals envisioned their roles as instructional leaders, the enactment of their vision for teaching and learning was hindered by

oppositional mindsets and pre-existing structures and practices at their school sites. In my observation and experience as a teacher and HoD, some schools in South Africa regard deputy principals as curriculum managers.

According to the PAM document (RSA, 2016), the duties and responsibilities of the deputy principal are individual and varied, depending on the approaches and needs of the particular school. These include, but are not limited to, the following: Firstly, “to assist the principal in his/her duties and to deputise for the principal during his/her absence from school” (RSA, 2016:31). Secondly, “to assist the principal, or, if instructed to be responsible for: School administration, e.g. duty roster, arrangements to cover absent staff, internal and external evaluation and assessment, school calendar, admission of new learners, class streaming, school functions; and school finance and maintenance of services and buildings. These could be the planning and control of expenditure, allocation of funds/resources, the general cleanliness and state of repairs of the school and its furniture and equipment, supervising annual stock-taking exercises” (RSA, 2016:31). Thirdly, to “participate in agreed school/educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice to improve teaching, learning and management” (RSA, 2016:31).

### ***2.3.1.3 The role of HoDs***

The next SMT member in the school structure is the HoDs. The HoDs in schools are regarded as leaders in their separate phases. HoDs are required to “control the work of educators and learners in the department, and to monitor and evaluate the performance of educators” (ELRC, 2008: 46). Ali and Botha (2006:17) in the first significant study of middle managers in South Africa, focused on 100 secondary school HoDs in Gauteng. These researchers noted that “if teaching and learning are to improve significantly, HoDs will have to spend much more time in supervising the teaching and learning activities that occur daily in their subject or learning area”. Leithwood (2016:122) asserts, “Department heads bring different perspectives to school decisions by virtue of their subject or discipline specialisations”.

According to the PAM document RSA (2016), the core duties and responsibilities of the HoDs includes but not limited to: Firstly, “to control the work of educators and learners in the department”. Secondly, “to participate in the agreed school/educator appraisal processes to regularly review their professional practice to improve teaching, learning and management” (RSA, 2016). In some small schools, HoDs report directly to the school principals, while in large schools with enormous numbers

of learners and many teachers, HoDs report to deputy principals, as well as principals depending on the setting of the school. Hence, they [HoDs] also need support to be able to perform their duties diligently. In this study, supporting and managing the professional development of teachers by HoDs ensures quality teaching and learning in the foundation phase.

I believe much more research is required on HoDs in primary schools, especially the foundation phase, to establish whether they differ from secondary school HoDs. Even though FP has nothing to do with matric results, but I have a firm belief that if more curriculum support is directed to FP HoDs and teachers by the education system in South Africa, matric scores in every year may improve. My observation is that the education system invests more in the final product of matric scores than the excellent foundation in the teaching and learning process. Teachers and HoDs in the foundation phase receive support from different stakeholders, but it is at a very minimal level as compare to high schools, specifically matric learners, teachers and SMT members. The HoDs and senior teachers attribute greater importance to curriculum management and monitoring of teaching and learning. The following section concludes this chapter.

## **2.4 DEFINING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Professional development, as defined by Wei, Darling-Hammond, Adamson (2010:1), is a “key strategy available to schools and school system for improving teaching quality”. According to Doig and Groves (2011); Mahlaela (2012); Du Plessis (2007); Moletsane (2004); “teacher professional development is driven by the need to both extend and renew teacher practice, skills and beliefs so that they become better equipped as a teacher and educational leaders”. Morake, (2014); Heystek, Nieman, Van Rooyen, Mosoge and Bipath (2008:174) argue convincingly that PD includes on-going workshops, follow-up, study, reflections, observations and assessments that accommodate teachers as learners, recognises the long-term nature of learning and utilises methods that are likely to lead teachers to improve their practice as professionals. Teachers’ professional development as defined by Mahlangu (2016:170) “is a vital aspect of the successful integration of novice teachers into classroom teaching”. As Mahlangu argued about novice teachers, however, this study focuses on both novice and experienced teachers. The study seeks to understand the support or role played by HoDs in managing teachers’ professional development in the foundation phase.

The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa acknowledges that strong leadership and proper management in schools are needed and that professional development activities must relate directly to the classroom responsibilities of teachers

(RSA, 2007). Professional development is considered an essential mechanism for deepening teachers' content knowledge and developing their teaching practices. Over the past decade, a large body of literature has emerged on in-service professional development, teacher learning, and teacher change (Desimone, Porter & Birnam, 2002). Professional development of teachers, often called in-service education or staff development, has been conducted for different purposes and in different forms (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). Mahlangu (2016:171) argues that "irrespective of the type of the school and location, all teachers in the present time are expected to have knowledge, skills and attitude related to their profession and responsibility". I align myself with Mahlangu, as I will explore the support and management of teacher professional development by HoDs.

According to Du Plessis and Eberlein (2018), conditions are created to support the professional development of educators and leadership and the distribution thereof. Heystek et al. (2008:174) identify the following conditions for successful professional development to be practised in schools: "school culture and structure, finding sufficient time for professional development, follow-up and in-school support, transfer of training as well as using adult learning principles". It will be imperative for schools to implement the conditions mentioned above to improve the implementation of teacher professional development by teachers and SMT members. "Education systems, therefore, seek to provide teachers with opportunities for in-service professional development to maintain a high standard of teaching and to retain a high-quality teacher workforce" (OECD, 2009:49). It is clear from the above statement that more training on teachers' professional development in schools is in high demand. Therefore, the study sought to understand the level of support received by teachers in the foundation phase in terms of professional teacher development and how it is managed by HoDs. The next sub-section discusses what "high quality" PD is.

#### **2.4.1 "High quality" professional development**

In the study conducted in the United States of America about professional development trends and challenges by Wei, Darling-Hammond and Adamson (2010), the literature reveals that professional consensus is emerging about characteristics of "high quality" professional development. These characteristics include a focus on content and how students learn content; in-depth, active learning opportunities; links to high standards, opportunities for teachers to engage in leadership roles; extended duration; and the collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school, grade, or department. Although lists of characteristics such as these commonly appear in the literature on effective professional development, there is little direct evidence on the extent to which these characteristics are related to better teaching and increased student achievement (Desimone, Porter &

Birnam, 2002). This study focuses on HoDs in the foundation phase who support and manage teachers in the same phase, ensuring that they work according to their grades in assisting one another in terms of curriculum implementation. For example, when a teacher in Grade 2 has much expertise in Mathematics, the teacher shares her expertise with all Grade 2 teachers. The teacher with expertise will be able to teach the content effectively.

“High- Quality” professional development focusses on specific curriculum content and pedagogies needed to teach that content effectively (Wei, Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2010). It is also offered as a coherent part of a whole-school reform effort, with assessments, standards, and professional development seamlessly linked. “High- Quality” professional development is also designed to engage teachers in active learning that allows them to make sense of what they learn in meaningful ways. It is presented in an intensive, sustained, and continuous manner over time and lastly, supported by coaching, modelling, observation, and feedback (ibid). HoDs may model good practices to teachers by submitting all necessary documents on time, such as work schedule and assessments. HoDs need to observe teachers in their classroom and continuously provide feedback on their findings to motivate and encourage teachers all the time. The following section looks at the few identified activities of teacher professional development, which includes coaching, mentoring, classroom/lesson observation, class visits, collaboration and lesson study.

## **2.4.2 Activities of teacher professional development**

### **2.4.2.1 Coaching**

Coaching, as defined by Owusu-Mensah (2013), is the process that enables individuals and organisations to achieve their full potential. Coaching takes place between teachers, senior teachers, experienced teachers, novice teachers and SMT. SMT members and teachers can be coached by external sources or coaching can take place within the school. In his view, Owusu-Mensah (2013) asserts that coaching is job-focused. It is clear from the above definition of coaching that, HoDs and teachers in the foundation phase can achieve their full potential through coaching. One can assume that learners’ results will also improve when teachers attend a coaching session, as it is a job-focused session. Heystek et al. (2008:186) assert that “the advantage of coaching is that professional development occurs at the critical level of the classroom, where it has the potential for a significant impact on learning”.



#### **2.4.2.2 Mentoring**

Different researchers and authors describe the term Mentoring and Mentor differently. Mentoring, as defined by the Cambridge dictionary, is an activity of supporting and advising someone with less experience to help them develop in their work. This definition takes into account the organisational setup, which could be government entities such as schools, circuit, districts and provincial offices, private sectors and NGOs. This definition also highlights the less experienced person, which could mean an intern in the government sector or at the school level, a newly appointed teacher from the university or college. In their views, Turner, Lucas and Whitaker (2018:1) define mentoring as an essential construct to support novice principals in this time of change.

Teachers need professional development to keep current with teaching practices, although costs for extensive professional development can be prohibitive across an education system. On the study conducted by Hudson (2013) on mentoring as professional development, the qualitative data showed that mentoring acted as professional development and led towards enhancing communication skills, developing leadership roles (problem-solving and building capacity) and advancing pedagogical knowledge. In his view, Hudson (2010) indicates that providing professional development to teachers on mentoring could help to build capacity in two ways: quality mentoring of pre-service teachers through explicit mentoring practices and reflecting and deconstructing teaching practices for mentors' pedagogical advancements. Mentoring is also documented in the PAM document as one of the roles and responsibilities of a senior and master teacher at the school (DBE, 2016).

South African primary school teachers generally exhibit poor subject knowledge in language and Mathematics, and consequently an incomplete understanding of both the requirements of the curriculum and how to animate it in their classes (NEEDU: 2013). In view of the above, and since FP teachers mostly seem to lack the pedagogical and content knowledge of the subjects that they are required to teach, it is recommended that HoDs in the FP be designated to serve as mentors of FP phase teachers. Having to deal with many subjects in their phase, FP teachers would require support and guidance in the way FP subjects need to be taught. In support of the above statement on HoDs to serve as mentors, the following researchers Kemmis, Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspfros and Edwards-Groves (2014); Owusu-Mensah (2013) assert that mentoring is considered as a contested notion and is characterised as three fundamental archetypes: mentoring as supervision (helping novices to pass through apprenticeship), mentoring as support (traditional mentoring where a veteran teacher guides a mentee), and mentoring as collaborative self- development (professional development through collegial mentoring). In view of the above, Du Plessis (2016) adds that HoDs may perform an

essential mentoring and supervisory leadership function in order to facilitate the professional development of their colleagues. In my view, HoDs are more likely than other SMT members to mentor, supervise and support teachers in managing teacher professional development, because they are leaders in the phase.

#### ***2.4.2.3 Classroom/lesson observation***

In my opinion, classroom or lesson observation is defined as an activity whereby a master teacher, a specialist, and HoDs, perhaps a very experienced teacher or colleague in a school observes teachers in their classrooms, assessing their instructional practices and providing structured feedback. This activity of PD may be used as a support measure following workshops or a seminar. Teachers want to see other teachers in action. According to Gaible and Burns (2007), in open classroom observation, teachers create lessons and invite colleagues to observe the lesson and provide feedback in a post-observation session.

When the observation is followed by structured discussions and information sharing, watching more skilled colleagues in action, it benefits both parties, those conducting the lesson and those observing (Gaible & Burns, 2007). According to Desimone (2011), some of the most powerful learning experiences occur in a teacher's classroom, through self-examination or observation. A study conducted by Bush and Glover (2013) on the school management team in South Africa reveals that classroom observation by SMT members receives significant support.

#### ***2.4.2.4 Class visits***

Class visits are one of the activities used by SMT in the school to monitor and support teachers in different focus areas. Teachers can be visited by SMT just to observe the teaching methodologies the teacher uses or the behaviour of learners during the teaching time. Other SMT members visit teachers to check whether exercise books are marked, and if the learners receive feedback from the teacher. At the school where I used to teach, some teachers never welcomed members of SMT to visit their classes as class visits were viewed by those individual teachers as a kind of policing, instead of being developmental. According to Mtanga (2016:51) "Class visit takes place when the principal or a member of the SMT goes to a classroom during contact time to assess how teaching and learning take place."

In the study conducted by Dongo (2016) on the principal's instructional leadership role towards creating effective teaching and learning, the study reveals that principals were discouraged by union

members from visiting teachers in their classrooms because they [unions] regarded that as labelling people or witch-hunting. The school principals from the above study were raising their frustrations towards class visits. One teacher from the same study, also added that unions deny principals and departmental officials from visiting teachers in their classrooms. However, in the study conducted by Mtanga (2016) on the response of educators to the principal's instructional leadership, the teacher reveals that HoDs in their schools, and not school principals, do the class visits. One teacher confirmed that after a class visit, he received feedback from the HoD where a completed form with comments was sent to him.

As an experienced teacher and former heads of department, the school principal and the SMT members used to draw a class visit programme to accommodate all the teachers at the school. Teachers can make inputs on the draft of the class visit programmes. The class visit may take place during the IQMS period, or any other time that is available at the school, teachers may select dates to be visited by SMT members (DBE, 2003). Based on my experience as a researcher and former foundation phase teacher and heads of department, all the teachers that agreed to be visited in their classes by SMT members improved in their pedagogical approach after the visit. The improvement in classroom practise, and teaching was due to constructive and developmental feedback from the SMT members. Class visits are regarded as part of monitoring instructions by SMT members in schools (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2014).

#### ***2.4.2.5 Collaboration***

The term collaboration has been used to refer to situations in which people work jointly with others or together in order to achieve a specific goal. This definition is similar to the report found in Ono and Ferreira (2010) who report that during a lesson study that is mostly conducted in Japan, collaboration is also used when teachers work collaboratively on ways to achieve the goal. Different schools consist of individual teachers who think and do things differently. These teachers can bring different ideas during staff or grade meetings, depending on the purpose of the meeting. All teachers are provided with space to teach; some space is far from each other. In that space, teachers are fully committed for the entire day. Time for professional development is limited. Using collaboration or cooperation as an activity of professional development forces these teachers to come together, work as a team based on the different ideas they may bring to the table. Tajino, Stewart and Dalsky (2016) add that collaborative or cooperative models bring collective synergy between teachers and increase positive effects.

Teachers feel valued to share and learn from their colleagues. This is undoubtedly true in the case of teachers being experts in curriculum delivery. However, positive effects are seen in learners' outcomes. The model of collaboration also increases a teacher's knowledge and skills.

Collaboration is intuitively a good idea for most people since we live in social communities. We may understandably feel that collaboration is happening all around us, as people continuously work together, and today they are often continuously communicating through social media (Tajino, Stewart & Dalsky, 2016:4). It was added by Villegas-Reimers (2003) that a new perspective of professional development should be conceived as a collaborative process. The PAM document of South Africa, in terms of roles and responsibilities of HoDs, allows HoDs to collaborate with teachers from other schools in order to develop their departments and extra-curricular activities (DBE, 2016).

#### **2.4.2.6 Lesson study**

A lesson study is a professional development activity that is characterised as classroom-situated, context-based, learner-focused, improvement-oriented and teacher- owned. It is also collaborative. In lesson studies, teachers collaboratively plan, develop or improve a lesson (Doig & Grove, 2011). These authors add that teachers field test the lesson in a classroom, observe it, make changes, and collect data to see the impact of the lesson on student learning. This usually occurs over months. The excellent part about lesson study is that it has a pre-session and post-session, where discussions are made. Teachers show interest in both sessions and echo a few statements about lesson planning in a group (ibid).

Lesson study has been practised in Japan and has been extended to USA and United Kingdom, Indonesia, Malaysia, South America, South Africa and Australia (White & Lim, 2008; Ono & Ferreira, 2010; Hollingworth & Oliver, 2005; Yang, 2009). It was revealed through trends in international Mathematics and Science (TIMSS) video study. In the United Kingdom, it is supported as the dominant form of professional development, but in Japan, the lesson study is not funded, it is mandatory (Doig & Groves, 2011). It is done at the school level and is organised by the teachers themselves. Ono and Ferreira (2010:65) argue that "the experience of the lesson study in Japan has the potential to get an effective teacher professional development established in schools".

In South Africa, there was a collaboration between the Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDOE), University of Pretoria (UP) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), where they introduced the Mpumalanga Secondary Science Initiative (MSSI). The Mpumalanga lesson

study was only focusing on General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET) in Mathematics and Science subjects, respectively. The coverage was only in Grade 8, 9 and 10. Most studies of lesson study have only been carried out in a small number of areas, i.e. Grade 8-10. Researchers have not treated a lesson study in the foundation phase in much detail. HoDs in GET and FET phases also attended a workshop with the exclusion of foundation phase HoDs. The Mpumalanga lesson study reveals that one of the regional directors attending a workshop has seen a lesson study as a teacher owned, a self-sustained form of professional development.

In South Africa, the focus on lesson study was only on Science and Mathematics. However, in Japan and the USA, it has been extended to Social Sciences and Languages (Ono & Ferreira, 2010). In a case study of two secondary schools in Beijing, Lai, Wang and Shen (2017) found that the schools improved due to principals' lesson observation and the provision of the instruction immediately after the lesson. One school principal reported that "offering concrete, specific feedback after lesson observation made teachers more willing to follow her directives for making improvements at the school" (Lai, Wang & Shen, 2017:321). This suggests that more principals need to be part of lesson observation to improve teaching and learning in schools. This project is the first comprehensive investigation of lesson study in Mpumalanga secondary schools. The insights gained from this study may be of assistance and be implemented in the foundation phase, wherein HoDs manage and support teachers during the lesson observation. HoDs in schools are regarded as subject specialists. Therefore, driving the process of lesson study will be of great importance for both HoDs and teachers. HoDs will manage the process by observing teachers teaching the lesson, and they will also provide teachers with feedback as support. This section has explored examples of professional development activities. The next part looks at other professional development activities that are implemented in South Africa. They are workshops, follow-up and in-school support, study groups as well as teamwork.

### **2.4.3 Professional development activities in South Africa**

#### ***2.4.3.1 Workshops***

The Provincial Department of Education is responsible for conducting workshops on a new curriculum to be taught. As the former assistant director in the provincial department, we used to conduct most curriculum workshops and training of teachers during school recess and in the afternoon for a shorter period. Certainly, many teachers require development and support, and it is clear that short courses of the order of 3-5 days have a negligible impact (Taylor, 2008). Overall, this

study (Taylor, 2008) strengthens the idea that workshops and training be conducted in more than 5 days for the proper implementation in schools.

In the study conducted by Morake (2014) on the implementation of PD in the foundation phase concerning CAPS, 67.53% of foundation phase teachers interviewed, reported that they attended 5 days CAPS training. However, 84.42% of the interviewed teachers complained that 5 days was insufficient. In support of a comment by Taylor (2008) earlier on, 76.6% of the foundation phase teachers (respondents) in Morake's study strongly disagreed that the CAPS training activities they attended deepened and broadened their knowledge of content. Based on the above findings, it is suggested that after every training or workshop attended by teachers, reinforcement of such training be done at the school level. Teachers can be further developed in schools through professional development and that HoDs ought to support and manage the process.

Teachers are expected to implement what they have learned during 3-5 days workshop or training, and little evidence is available on whether they are able or not to implement what they learned. I suggest that schools' internal programmes will be effective, as teachers will implement professional development within their teaching time, such as team teaching, depending on the expertise in different subjects. It is suggested that HoDs encourage team teaching as part of a workshop and be able to support and manage teachers during the implementation. According to Taylor (2008), it is becoming apparent that intensive in-service training, in the order of weeks per year is required to equip teachers with the knowledge they need to teach effectively. The task of provincial and district officials is to develop the capacity among school leaders and maintain an effective system of in-school professional development (DBE, 2012).

#### ***2.4.3.2 Follow-up and in-school support***

Follow-up and in-school support is the process done by district officials such as subject advisers or curriculum implementers, to ensure that teachers implement what they were taught at the workshop or training. The terms subject adviser and curriculum implementer are used interchangeably by different provinces and their districts. The curriculum implementers or subject advisers are specialists in different subjects to support teachers in the implementing of the approved curriculum. Teachers attend workshops arranged by district offices. Follow-up is expected by teachers on the content taught during training or workshops. The purpose of follow-ups is to ensure that what was taught at the workshop, is implemented at the school level (Heystek et al., 2008).

However, support from departmental officials responsible for curriculum support is done but is not enough. In my view, the support is not done as expected, and that might be due to different reasons. Heystek et al. (2008) also question the quality of the in-school support and follow-up conducted by subject advisers, and they also argue that the support is not frequent due to the number of schools the officials need to visit and support. It can be well noted that HoDs in the foundation may play an essential role in supporting teachers and make a follow-up from what teachers learned from the workshop. According to the PAM document (RSA, 2016), HoDs are regarded as school-based subject specialists.

#### ***2.4.3.3 Study groups***

A study group may be regarded as when two or more teachers come together to help each other in teaching a particular content. In South Africa, most teachers are underqualified or unqualified. Those teachers who are studying to improve their qualifications are either underqualified or unqualified (Heystek et al., 2008). We also have teachers with proper qualifications but are interested in improving their teaching and content knowledge through study groups. All teachers, qualified, underqualified may wish to form study groups in order to achieve their goals (Wei, Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2010).

In my view, schools may also use study groups for the professional development of teachers. Different teachers may come together, based on the subjects they are teaching. Teachers may come together to discuss the content of the subject they are teaching based on an approved curriculum in South Africa. Foundation phase teachers led by HoDs may also share their teaching methods and strategies they are using in their schools, during those study groups. In South Africa, most schools are still doing class teaching in the foundation phase, and teachers may form grade study groups. Teachers in the foundation will benefit from the study groups which are managed by HoDs as subject specialists, at the school level. When teachers as peers gathered together for critical discussion on a particular topic, most teachers benefit from such discussion (Wei, Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2010). In addition, the same authors assert that for a study group, teachers may collaborate in small or large teams to discuss a particular topic to achieve a specific goal (ibid).

#### ***2.4.3.4 Teamwork***

“Professional development thrives where educators work together in teams” (Heystek et al. 2008:187). Teachers may work in teams around the school, or they may form teams with other neighbouring schools. The purpose of teaming together or working together in groups is to assist

each other on the same subjects they teach in their schools. Team and group work may be the schools' effort, without the involvement of the Department of Education. Schools may plan to meet during school recess in a particular place to plan together as per their subject allocations from their respective schools.

Educators find it challenging to work in silos; they find it difficult to understand some curriculum challenges. Teamwork becomes an answer for educators to collaborate and help one another. In my view, teamwork is a South African concept that is used by many schools to support teaching and learning. During teamwork, educators are allowed to share their expertise and knowledge on the content to be taught; novice educators may learn from the experienced educators (Heystek et al., 2008). The foundation phase teachers, with the support from HoDs, might benefit a lot from teamwork. Teaming and working together with other foundation phase teachers, in order to learn from each other in teaching all the subjects taught in the foundation phase is beneficial. HoDs in the foundation phase may lead teamwork by providing teachers with a different topic to discuss and lead the discussion. The following section looks at professional learning communities.

#### **2.4.4 Professional learning communities**

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED) in South Africa states that a “professional learning community model should have been introduced in all public schools by 2017” (RSA, 2011:82). PLC is “communities that provide the setting and necessary support for groups of classroom teachers, school managers and subject advisers to participate collectively in determining their developmental trajectories” (RSA, 2011-2025). This teacher development plan is of particular interest since it is based on the concept of professional learning communities and aims to achieve a dramatic improvement in the quality of learning and teaching in schools that have diverse socio-economic contexts (Republic of South Africa, 2015:1).

In my opinion, collaboration, as the activity of TPD, can be incorporated into PLC. Primary schools can benefit from using collaboration or cooperation as a model for professional development. This model allows teachers from the same grade and cross-grade to meet and seek development in improving their teaching skills. Ideas sharing in groups will allow the teams to learn and improve the method of teaching and learning. This group of teachers from the same grade or cross-grade can form professional learning communities. It is suggested that professional learning communities be done in a manner that it does not end up in grade, subject or staff meetings. In my opinion, all decisions taken



during the PLC meetings need to be implemented in classroom practice to improve knowledge and skills.

Forming teachers into groups as per grade as well as cross-grade ensures that the groups implement the given task. The collaborative model will not work by just forming a group and not being monitored by a senior member of the school. The models of professional development that work by generating professional learning communities depend heavily on the benefits of pooled knowledge and skills (RSA, 2015). PLC emphasises the collective responsibility of teachers. In this study, a case of foundation phase teachers forming a professional learning community with the support of their HoDs is explored. The HoDs in the same phase may manage those teachers in their professional development activities, to improve their content knowledge. According to Sterwart (2014:28) “Learning communities thrive when all participants are invested in the work they are doing”. The next section reviews the critical concept of school leadership. This is followed by distinguishing between school leadership and management. Definitions of the term leadership and the term management are discussed separately. Later, this section discusses school leadership structures in South African schools, as well as the roles and responsibilities of those leadership structures (SMT) members.

To date, few studies have been conducted on the roles and responsibilities of the foundation phase HoDs. A study by Bush, Kiggudu and Mooros (2011) revealed that the responsibilities of the HoDs in South Africa include checking educators’ portfolios, workbooks, and learners’ work to verify if educators’ work corresponds with the learners’ outcomes. However, there was a lack of reference to the foundation phase HoDs. This study extended the scope of the existing studies by investigating the role of the foundation phase HoDs in the management of teachers’ professional development in the foundation phase.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter reviewed the existing literature on teacher professional development and high-quality professional development with considerable emphasis on activities of TPD that are practised internationally and nationally. Several TPD activities were explored in this study. Then the study explored professional learning communities. Following that, was the discussion on the concept of school leadership, the difference between leadership and management as well as school leadership structures in South Africa. Finally, the study looked at the school management team in South Africa, the discussion on their roles and responsibilities of SMT members then followed.

The next chapter dwells on the theoretical framework used in the study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

This study was undertaken from an instructional leadership perspective, and therefore, instructional leadership as the theoretical framework is discussed in this chapter. Instructional leadership is examined as practices of leadership functions relating to the professional development of teachers by Heads of Departments (HoDs). This chapter presents the theoretical framework underpinning the phenomenon at the core of this study, namely managing teacher professional development.

The framework starts by exploring the instructional leadership theory. This chapter also focuses on dimensions of instructional leadership skills by defining the school mission and vision, management of instructional programmes, as well as developing a positive learning climate. Later, the chapter explores the characteristics of instructional leaders, followed by the discussion of school principals and HoDs as instructional leaders. The final section of this chapter focuses on the contextual factors that influence instructional leadership effectiveness.

In order to provide a clear picture of the phenomenon under discussion, which is instructional leadership, the following section starts by defining the concepts of instructional leadership as the theoretical framework of this study.

#### **3.2. INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY**

Instructional leadership as defined by Mestry (2017:261) is “those actions that school principals take, or delegate to others, to promote growth in learners’ learning”. Successful schools are linked to strong instructional leadership (Horng & Laeb, 2010). Leaders could mentor their teaching staff by observing practice, providing pointed feedback, and modelling instruction when necessary; the influential relationship that motivates, enables and supports teachers’ efforts to learn and change their instructional practices (Horng & Laeb, 2010; Mestry & Pillay, 2013). A traditional and different view of instructional leadership are identified by Horng and Laeb (2010:66) as indicating that “the traditional instructional leadership literature emphasises teaching and learning aspects of school leadership, but a different view of instructional leadership emphasises organisational management for instructional improvement rather than day-to-day teaching and learning”. This study examines the instructional practices of HoDs in supporting teacher professional development in terms of

improving teaching skills, professional knowledge, competence and effectiveness in their classrooms and not acquiring new qualifications. Based on the statement above on HoDs' instructional practices, this study also leans more on organisation management for instructional improvement rather than day-to-day teaching and learning, as indicated by Horng and Laeb (2010).

There are various kinds of leadership such as strategic, executive, distributed, instructional, organisational and cultural leadership. The most essential and significant kind of leadership is instructional leadership, as it is recognised as the most essential activity for principals and other school leaders (Bush, 2013). It was also noted by Southworth (2002:17) that “despite leadership and management involving a diverse number of activities and processes and although it is differentiated in its character, instructional leadership is central to successful school leadership and it is portrayed as occurring along multiple dimensions and incorporating a number of practices”. In this study, the management and support of teacher professional development by HoDs in the foundation phase is the practice that was investigated.

All SMT members have different roles and responsibilities to perform in schools, as outlined by the PAM document (DBE, 2016). In my view, managing teaching and learning is not confined to the school principal. I propose that four levels might share the responsibilities of management. The levels include but are not limited to the school principals, deputy principal, heads of departments and classroom teachers. Bush (2013) indicates that, while educators are responsible for managing curriculum implementation in their classrooms, HoDs have the responsibilities for ensuring effective teaching and learning across their learning area or phases. The next section deals with dimensions of instructional leadership skills, which include defining the school mission and vision, followed by the management of instructional programmes and developing a positive learning climate.

### **3.2.1. Dimensions of instructional leadership skills**

This research study utilised the dimensions of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership to understand school leadership practices. Hallinger and Murphy identify three dimensions of instructional leadership, and each dimension consists of specific job functions (ibid). The first dimension defines the school's mission, and the functions are: frames the school goal as well as communicates the school goal (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). The second dimension is managing the instructional programme, and the functions are: supervises and evaluate instructions, coordinates curriculum as well as monitor students' progress (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The third and last dimension is developing a positive learning climate, and the functions are as follows: protects

instructional time, maintains high visibility, promotes professional development as well as provide incentives for learning. The next sub-section focuses on the first dimension in defining the school's mission and vision.

### ***3.2.1.1 Defining the school mission and vision***

The first dimension explores the mission and vision of the school. Hallinger and Murphy (1985: 57) assert that “instructional leaders have a clear vision of what the school is trying to accomplish”. In other words, the school mission and vision may focus on the academic excellence of learners and excellent achievements in extramural activities. The school mission as defines by Al-Mahdy, Emam and Hallinger (2018:193) “refers to the principal's responsibility for articulating and communicating a vision for learning, as well as building support for enacting the vision in the life of the school”.

The first dimension expects the school principal to draft the school mission and vision with other relevant stakeholders. Various stakeholders at the school level might include SMT members, teachers, SGB, parents and learners in high schools. Sharing schools' goals with other school community members enables the school principal to get buy-in and support for the vision. According to Sisman (2016:1762) “it is expected from a school principal playing a leading role in identifying school goals by initially determining school vision and mission”. Sisman (2016: 1762) adds “the importance of school goals needs to be emphasised, explained and shared during the meetings with students, teachers and parents”.

Principals are expected to “empower staff to become instructional leaders who share the responsibility for achieving the mission, vision and goals that have been set” (DBE, 2015:9). All stakeholders may support the principal in drafting the mission, vision and goals of the school. The cooperation of all stakeholders will allow them to own and support the mission, vision and goals of the school that will be more on teaching and learning. In addition, Sijako (2017:39) argues that “it is important that, in deciding on mission and vision of the school, consultation be held at various levels with all interest groups in order to create a sense of ownership and to secure the sustainability of such a mission”. The school principal should “work with everyone in the school's community to ensure that the vision and mission of the school are translated into agreed goals and operational plans, designed to promote and sustain on-going school improvement” (DBE, 2015:13). Teachers, learners and parents look upon their leaders as role models. The school principals must lead by example by modelling what they preach in terms of values and vision of the school in daily practice.

In his view, Sijako (2017:40) states “principals have to use all existing communicating channels to broadcast the vision, these include the school flag, main school entrance, noticeboards, staff functions, school governing body meetings, community meetings, and the front page of the newsletter”. Various ways should be found to advertise and disseminate the school’s vision (DBE, 2012). According to Mestry, Moonsammy-Koopsammy and Schmidt (2013); Bhengu and Mkhize, (2013), the foundation of effective leadership is thinking through the organisation’s mission, defining it and establishing it clearly and visibly. Bhengu and Mkhize (ibid) assert that where school’s principal formulates a clear vision, it is bound to perform well as compared to the non-visionary leader, without a vision, wherein a school lacks direction. To achieve excellent performance, HoDs may communicate the mission and vision of the school with teachers in the foundation phase. The HoDs may infuse the support and management of teacher professional development in the mission statement of the school.

In the study conducted by Dongo (2016) on the principal’s leadership role, two principals that were interviewed and agreed that their roles as instructional leaders are to communicate the vision and mission of the school. The interviewees added that the vision and mission of the school need to focus on the primary purpose of the school, which is teaching and learning and quality education to sustain learners in adult life. In addition, Sijako (2017:1) argues that “principals need to cultivate leadership in others so that teachers and school community members perform their part in realising the school's vision”. In my view, when teachers are developed and supported daily, it will yield better results in teaching and learning. In addition, principals may cultivate leadership in others so that teachers and school community members perform their part in realising the school's vision. Having defined what is meant by school mission and vision as the first dimension, I will now move on to discuss the second dimension, which is the management of instructional programmes in schools.

### ***3.2.1.2 Management of instructional programmes***

The school principal, as the manager of the school, is expected to manage instructional programmes in schools. However, Hallinger and Murphy (1985) suggest that the school principal works with staff in most essential areas related to monitoring, evaluation, development, as well as the implementation of curriculum and instruction. According to Al-Mahdy, Emam and Hallinger (2018:193), managing the instructional program refers to “leadership actions that develop, coordinate and monitor the quality of teaching and learning”. The above researchers added that “within this dimension, functions related to curriculum coordination and instructional supervision are often delegated or carried out in collaboration with vice principals, department heads, and teacher leaders” (Al-Mahdy, Emam &

Hallinger, 2018:193). Therefore, I align myself with Al-Mahdy, Emam, Hallinger (2018) due to changes in curriculum and the heavy workload on school principals; some of the activities are delegated to deputy principals and HoDs.

The school principal delegates the role of managing teacher professional development to other SMT members, especially HoDs. In the foundation phase, the HoD supports teachers in implementing the activities of teacher professional development. According to Sijako (2017:38), the “instructional programmes are managed by the school management under the auspices of the principal”.

This dimension incorporates three leadership or what might be termed management functions: Supervises and Evaluates Instruction, Traditionally, educational management by principle was primarily regarded as supervision and evaluation of education (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). As well as, Coordinates the Curriculum, “Principal coordinates the curriculum by ensuring that students receive appropriate instruction in areas identified by the district” (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985:57). Monitors student progress, “Principal involvement in monitoring student progress both within the individual classroom and across grades in an equally potent, but an underemphasised area of principal activity” (ibid). This dimension focuses on the role of the principal in “managing the technical core” of the school, and they (principals) are accountable to the Department of Education for teachers’ none compliance (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger & Heck 1998; Leithwood, 2006). According to Spillane and Diamond (2007), the work of improving teaching not only rests in the hands of the principal but is also distributed across a host of leaders such as teacher leaders and instructional coaches.

SMT members in South Africa can be regarded as teacher leaders and instructional coaches as they work very closely with the school principal, and they often share responsibilities for instructional improvement. This dimension requires the principal and other leaders to be engaged in stimulating, supervising and monitoring teaching and learning in the school, it remains critical to model and organises the whole leadership team to ensure that this gets done (Barth, 1990; Hallinger & Heck, 2010, 2011a, b; Heck & Hallinger, 2014). These functions also demand that the principal has expertise in teaching and learning, as well as a commitment to the school’s improvement. Some researchers reveal that school principals with expertise in curriculum or teaching and learning can implement instructional leadership programmes (Haim, Chanina, Shmuel & Zaretsky, 2017).

According to Hallinger and Wang (2015), the principal is visibly engaged in using multiple strategies to develop the quality of teaching and learning and ensure that assessments of student learning

progress drive curriculum and instructional decision-making. Hallinger and Murphy (2013) support the above statement by indicating that managing and coordinating curriculum and instruction is one of the fundamental roles of a principal who is an instructional leader. In addition, Bush (2013) argues that managing the instructional programmes include, but not limited to, setting the framework for effective teaching and learning by the school principal, as well as developing policies to address issues and ensuring that the curriculum delivery is well implemented.

In the study conducted by Dongo (2016); Mtanga (2016) teachers confirm that in their schools, instructional leadership programmes are left to the HoDs and deputy principals. Teachers from the study raised a concern that they expect the principal to manage the curriculum as the instructional leader, but the principal neglects those duties by delegating them to other SMT members. Both above studies reveal that not all HoDs implement the processes of monitoring teaching and learning. However, it happens in some departments or subjects and not in others. One teacher from the study indicated that “ there is a need for more constant class visits from both HoDs and the principal” ( Mtanga, 2016:52). In support of the above statement on delegation of duties Hallinger and Wang (2015:13); Hallinger and Lee (2013:307) agree that delegation can be done especially in high schools due to lack of expertise in all subjects taught. They agreed that the principal might delegate the monitoring and developing of the school instructional programme as he/she may not be the only person involved in monitoring.

In his conclusion, Dongo (2016) argues that these principals delegate such duties to SMT members due to a lack of training in management skills. In his conclusion, Dongo (2016) is supported by Petersen ( 2015) who asserts that most SA school principals seem to be appointed based on their teaching experience in the classroom, but they lack instructional leadership skills due to insufficient training (Hoadley, 2009). However, in the study conducted by Nkogatse (2017) on instructional leadership in Sekhukhune District of Limpopo, two novice principals acknowledged their roles and tasks in terms of managing instructional programmes as their core functions. However, it is unclear whether these principals practice what they preach.

It is, however, motivating from the literature review that most school principals delegate their instructional leadership powers to other SMT members, especially HoDs, taking into account that this study focuses on the management of teacher professional development by HoDs. Developing a positive learning climate has been identified as the third dimension of instructional leadership, and it is dealt with in the next sub-section.



### ***3.2.1.3 Develops a positive learning climate***

The development of a positive learning climate as indicated by Hallinger and Murphy (1985:58) refers to the “norms and attitudes of the staff and students that influence learning in the school”. Develops a positive school learning climate is defined by Al-Mahdy, Emam and Hallinger (2018) as the role that managers play in creating conditions that motivate and support teachers and students towards productive participation in teaching, learning and improving schools.

The functions related to developing a positive learning climate, as indicated by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) firstly maintain a high vision in order to communicate the priorities and expectations of the model. The school principal should be visible in most school activities to ensure support and expectations. Secondly, creating a reward system that enhances academic achievement and productive effort is beneficial. In other words, students and teachers may be rewarded at the end of the year for the excellent performance in both academic and extramural activities. Thirdly, setting a clear and explicit standard that reflects the school's expectations of students. Fourthly, protecting instructional time. By protecting instructional time, the school principal should ensure that teaching time is not compromised by other activities in the school. Lastly, select and participate in high-quality employee development programmes in line with the school vision. In other words, all members of the staff at the school should participate in professional development in order to improve teaching and learning at the school.

In the school setting, SMT promotes the professional development of teachers in various ways. According to Mtanga (2016:16), the purpose of professional development is to “enhance skills and competencies required to improve teaching and learning”. In addition, Mampane (2017) asserts that for the school performance to improve, the professional development of teachers is a priority that should be well managed. Based on my experience as a school evaluator, in some schools, professional development is done by school principals; however, in other schools, deputy principals and HoDs are responsible for teacher professional development. In their views, McChesney and Aldridge (2018:314) argue, “Many schools and education system leaders assume that if teacher professional development occurs, then the desired outcomes will follow”. In this study, the term professional development refers to activities, events or programmes that provide (or are intended to provide) opportunities for teachers to grow, learn or develop (McChesney & Aldridge, 2018). This approach is appropriate for the HoDs to support and manage teacher professional development in the foundation to acquire the desired outcome of learner achievement and the improved teaching and learning, using specific activities of TPD.

In the study conducted by Bhengu and Mkhize, (2013); Mtanga, (2016) on principal's instructional leadership practices, the data reveal that principals in these studies promoted professional development in various ways. For an example, one school principal concluded that he conducts workshops at school with teachers as part of teacher professional development, while his counterparts from the study preferred their teachers to attend workshop arranged by the Department of Education. Another school principal argued that professional development was good for teachers for the enhancement of their teaching, and promoting the professional development of teachers as part of supporting effective instruction (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013; Mtanga, 2016).

In my view, teaching and learning will improve in the classroom when SMT members support and manage teachers' professional development. This statement is supported by the DBE (2000) that principals as instructional leaders should organise in-service training programmes as a way of upgrading their teachers' instructional knowledge. In his view, Donga (2016) asserts that most township principals do not organise or arrange in-service training sessions, but they mostly depend on the departmental organised workshops that are conducted by subject advisers. According to Nkogatse (2017), it is the responsibility of the school principal to ensure that teachers are constantly engaged in professional development to enhance or broaden their skills and knowledge.

### **3.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS**

School leaders need to possess unique characteristics that will identify them as committed and focused leaders. According to Hallinger and Wang (2015:7), instructional leaders are “described as leading from a combination of both expertise and charisma”. They add that “they used influence more than ‘position power’ in motivating staff towards collective goals” (ibid). Instructional leaders focused on coordinating, controlling, and supervising curriculum and instruction as well as monitoring progress towards desired outcomes (Hallinger & Wang, 2015; Nkogatse, 2017). School curricular objectives are closely aligned to both the content taught in classes and the achievement tests used by the school (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). Mestry and Pillay (2013) identify characteristics of instructional leadership as follows: leadership influencing the quality of education in schools, enhancing learner achievement, managing resources to improve teaching and learning, pedagogic and curriculum management effectively.

The positive attitude of instructional leaders towards teachers, their support and value for the personnel and effective problem-solving abilities ensure the personnel to be more successful and productive, to be occupied by their work and to associate with their co-workers in the school

environment (Mestry & Pillay, 2013). Instructional leaders become role models for teachers and motivate them. In this case, teachers do not resist their leaders and become much happier (Hawkins, 2011; Yukl, 2008). Nevertheless, in the Turkish education system, which has bureaucratic characteristics, it is more probable for teachers to have attitudes that are more positive for instructional leader administrators when compared with Western countries (Sisman, 2016). Such leadership consists of the behaviours in which teachers are considered essential, they are listened to, and their interests are taken into consideration (ibid).

South African education needs theories of leadership that are relevant to the context of the country (Bush, Glover, Bischoff, Moloi, Heystek & Joubert, 2006). Any such theory must take into account the problematic contexts in which teachers work, and should be able to build human capacity, historical, social files that continue to have an adverse impact on education and learning (Seobi & Wood, 2016). Teachers work under challenging contexts such as overcrowding, high teacher-learner ratio, and learners from impoverished backgrounds. Until all the challenges are addressed, teachers will not be considered essential.

According to Rigby (2014:617), “Most of a principal’s instructional leadership actions are focused on teachers either through direct interactions such as observation and feedback or through indirect interactions such as brokering expertise to improve teacher instruction”. The HoDs may observe teachers during the activities of professional development, and later feedback will be provided to teachers to improve teacher instruction. The next section focuses on the school principal as an instructional leader.

### **3.3.1 The school principal as instructional leader**

The school principal is the head of the school, representing the Head of Department (HoD) or Superintended General (SG) of the province. Principals are expected to be instructional leaders in their schools by focusing most of their time and energy on ensuring quality teaching and learning (Mendels, 2012). It is part of the role of a principal to create a school culture that is conducive to teaching and learning (DBE, 2012). In my view, the school principal as the instructional leader must be well informed about current developments in the education sector since the instructional context is forever changing. Twenty-first-century principals are considered instructional leaders (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Furthermore, knowledge of technological integration in teaching and learning is also imperative for the principals who want to be relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Toprakçı, Beytekin & Chipala, 2016).

The idea that principals serve as instructional leaders is seen as an alternative to attaining learners' outcome within the education fraternity (Noonan & Hellsten, 2013).

A central task of the principal is to ensure that the goals of the school are translated into practice at the classroom level (Nkogatse, 2017). This involves coordinating the classroom objectives of teachers with those of the school and evaluating classroom instruction (ibid). In addition, the task of the principal also includes providing instructional support to teachers and monitoring classroom instruction through formal and informal classroom visits and others engaged in instructional support (Liu & Zhao, 2013).

The national Department of Basic Education in South Africa has identified activities of the school principals as an instructional leader (DBE, 2015). The activities are: firstly, to “lead the learners and ensure that the school is a professional learning community”. In other words, the school principal ensures that teaching and learning are taking place at school. Secondly, “lead to continuous improvement in curriculum implementation”. The curriculum will improve with continuous support from the school principal. Thirdly, “lead the school into the future through the use of ICT”. We are now in the fourth industrial revolution; the use of ICT starts at the primary school level to high schools; the school principal may support the use of ICT daily. Fourthly, “foster the success of all learners, promoting a culture of achievement for all learners by communicating and implementing a common vision and mission that is shared by all stakeholders” (DBE, 2015:19).

In addition to the above four activities, school principals are also expected to “develop and implement an instructional framework that is data-driven, research-based, and aligned with the national curriculum. Additionally, they need to empower staff to become instructional leaders who share the responsibility for achieving the mission, vision and goals that have been set” (DBE, 2015:20). Finally, school principals need to “recognise good instructional practices that motivate and increase learner achievement and encouraging educators to implement these practices”. (DBE, 2015:20). It is an indisputable fact that the school principal should align him/herself with the current curriculum for all the grades in the school. In this way, the learner achievement will be increased every year.

In South Africa, school principals attend compulsory professional qualification for principalship, Advanced Certificate in Education (school leadership). The above programme was designed by the Department of Education in 2008, and it was intended to focus on school management. The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) was established in South Africa to develop

principals in different managerial aspects. This project is located at the Johannesburg West and Johannesburg Central Districts. It focuses on the training of 100 school leaders on instructional leadership and human resource management, leading towards an ACE qualification. The same qualification Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) was also done through the University of Pretoria, focusing on school leaders from Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces, respectively (DBE, 2008).

There is a clear indication that not all school principals were trained in instructional leadership. In the study conducted by Dongo (2016); Sojika (2017) on principal's leadership roles, the findings reveal that two schools' principals from the study, described instructional leadership as the process of giving instructions and guidance to teachers on the daily running of the school. The above explanation was clear that both principals have partial understanding in terms of describing instructional leadership. However, the findings also reveal that both principals were implementing instructional leadership in their schools by monitoring and supervising all daily activities (Dongo, 2016). Contrary to the study conducted on novice principals, on their understanding of instructional leadership (Nkogatse, 2017; Sojika, 2017) the school principals understood the concept of instructional leadership that it entails teaching and learning, monitoring as well as supervision of the curriculum. By teaching and learning, one principal reported that she controls all period registers with all lessons' details, to ensure that teachers are in class teaching. The teachers also sign the period register whenever they attend classes (Sojika, 2017).

In the study conducted by Sojika (2017) on the roles of principals on instructional leadership, his findings reveal that other school principals use delegation as part of instructional leadership. One principal in the same study reported that he delegated his task of monitoring to other SMT members and other teachers whom he thinks can perform the task in the absence of SMT members (Sojika, 2017). Here, the principal is seen as able to develop other teachers who might be able or interested to become school leaders one day, which is a good thing. For example, the principal builds his timber at the school. In this study, delegation, if used, may benefit the HoDs in the foundation phase, HoDs delegate senior teachers to mentor novice teachers. In addition, teachers may also be delegated per phase and per grade. In my experience as the HoD in the foundation phase, I used to have grade heads and phase heads as the foundation phase committee. The committee was so helpful and useful as they were delegated my duties in my absence.

Researchers identify functions of school principals in a variety of ways. Grobler (2014) indicates that the school principal is responsible for the monitoring of lesson plans and teaching as functions of

instructional leadership. Grobler (ibid) adds that school principals should coordinate and influence teaching and learning processes in a direct way. Also Mestry, Moonsammy-Koopsammy and Schmidt (2013 ); Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) view principal's instructional leadership whereby the principal sets goals, manage the curriculum and supervise all the practices related to teaching and learning. In support of the above statement on the roles of the principal, Du Plessis (2013:82) alludes to the fact that "a good principal's instructional leadership prevails only when she/he provides direction and instructional support to both teachers and learners to improve the curriculum delivery in the class positively". In contrast to other scholars, Donga (2016) argues that in South African township schools, principals overlook their instructional leadership and focus only on learner absenteeism, attending to parents, administering paperwork and maintenance of the physical environment.

Based on my experience as a teacher and foundation phase HoD, school principals report directly to the circuit, district, provincial and national offices of the DBE. In my view, the School Governing Body (SGB) and staff members at school also depend on the expertise of the principal; hence they are seen to be at the centre of the triangle (Grobler, 2014). I align with Dongo (2016:16) that in "SA education context, the accountability of teaching and learning rests upon the principal's shoulder". Dongo (2016:16) adds that "If a school performs poor, the departmental evaluation process starts with the school's principal". As the school evaluator, we used to ask the principal about the causes of learners' poor performance, especially in Grade 12. The South African education system is benchmarked by the performance of Grade 12 learners. The National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination is an objective measure of the system, and it is used as the yardstick to identify schools that work (DBE, 2017).

The study conducted in Israel and at a US Jewish school on instructional leadership practices, Haim, Chanina, Shmuel and Zaretsky (2017) reveal that instructional leadership is viewed as a vital role to be played by school principals in order to improve student achievement. However, in terms of gender, the study reveals that female principals were good in instructional leadership as compared to male principals. Hallinger and Chung Wang (2015) conclude that women in principalship have the potential and expertise in teaching and learning, personal values, emotional competencies as well as communication style. Findings also suggest that US principals demonstrated significantly higher levels of instructional leadership. In both groups, women principals demonstrated higher levels of instructional leadership. It was interesting to note that women principals have vast knowledge of the curriculum as compared to their counterparts; hence, they excel in implementing instructional

leadership (Haim, Chanina, Shmuel & Zaretsky, 2017). This study thus focuses on instructional leadership of HoDs in the foundation phase, and according to my experience as a teacher and HoD, most foundation phase HoDs are females.

Despite the training of 100 school leaders, Grobler (2014) suggests that school leaders (untrained and novice) need training regarding instructional leadership and that training should factor the following features: gender, type of school, union affiliation of teachers, socio-economic status of the learners in the school and ethnic home language groups. Therefore, I align myself with the features mentioned above, as they will assist the department, universities, or NGOs to structure relevant training for the relevant recipients. In my view, such training will not only benefit the school principal but the entire SMT. The next sub-section discusses HoDs as instructional leaders.

### **3.3.2 The HoDs as instructional leaders**

The HoD is a teacher at Post Level 2, which is on the management level at the school. HoDs are required to “control the work of educators and learners in the department, and to monitor and evaluate the performance of educators” (ELRC, 2008: 46). Management of teacher professional development by HoDs is part of instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2005). The study by Bush and Glover (2013) concluded that the HoDs should show a strong focus on curriculum management and suggests an increasing emphasis on instructional leadership. “HoDs as teacher leaders play a dual role; they are teachers as well as leaders/supervisors of particular phases and subject areas in the schools” (Mampane, 2017:148). For HoDs to acquire competency, they require support and guidance in leadership and management to enhance their teacher support skills (Mampane, 2017:148).

The HoDs are regarded as a group of people with formal leadership roles. HoDs have formal leadership roles as outlined by policies and legislations such as PAM and SASA in South Africa. The concept of formal leadership is acknowledged by the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) in their 2012 National Report when they declare that “HoDs are the only teachers that can offer sustained and frequent assistance to effect changes in classroom practice” (DBE, 2013:81). Du Plessis (2016) argues that HoDs are required to be up to date with recent curriculum developments and to be more than competent teachers if they wish to have credibility among their colleagues. In this study, HoDs in the foundation phase play the role of instructional leader by managing and supporting teachers’ professional development.

A study conducted in Malaysia on the competencies of secondary school HoDs, the study highlights one of their primary roles, namely to identify the best and most innovative teaching strategies to enhance learning (Onn, 2012). This study further indicates that HoDs are responsible for leading teams of teachers to ensure that the curricula are developed, delivered and assessed, programmes are evaluated, and teachers are appraised. In addition, HoDs also select, prepare and organise teaching-learning materials and encourage their effective use in the classroom (Onn, 2012). In short, HoDs are responsible for all aspects of the instructional programmes in their subject areas or phase.

According to Nkabinde (2012), HoDs play a pivotal role in the school and are recognised for their expertise in their respective subject and teaching methodologies. In South Africa, HoDs in the foundation phase must be experts in all subjects in the phase, from Grade R to Grade 3 (Nkabinde, 2012). In other words, teachers in the foundation phase were trained to teach all foundation phase subjects in one class; hence HoDs are experts in all subjects. This is a significant burden, especially in a school where there are many learners in the class. Furthermore, the HoD is expected to teach their own class full-time (Nkabinde, 2012). HoDs in the foundation phase need to participate in professional development activities that focus on their roles and responsibilities in order to address teachers' perceptions and expectations.

Based on my experience as the former foundation phase HoD, the roles of the HoDs in the foundation phase are recognised where they are expected to engage in class teaching as per the workload specified for the relevant post level and the needs of the school. Not only do HoDs teach in their classrooms, but also they are expected to manage and supervise other educators and perform classroom management in terms of writing learners' reports and record-keeping (DBE, 2000; 2001). Equipping HoDs in leadership and management skills may result in lifelong learning, personal development and professional development (Mampane, 2017). The next section focuses on the contextual factors that influence instructional leadership effectiveness.

### **3.4 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS**

Investigating the effectiveness of instructional leadership and what inhibits its effectiveness is a continuing concern within the whole education system. The SA education system includes and is not limited to National; Provincial; Districts and Schools levels. It is also concerned about the poor performance of learners in some parts of the country, while other learners are performing well. There is a lot of investment from the DBE in leadership to improve instruction, such as holiday



camps and extra classes for Grade 12 learners (Neuman & Wright, 2010). Instructional leadership is a significant area of interest within the field of education, especially at the school level. The issue of instructional leadership has received considerable critical attention and has been studied by many researchers using school principals as the instructional leader (Neuman & Wright, 2010). Recent developments in the field of leadership and management have led to a renewed interest in the factors inhibiting the effectiveness of instructional leadership (Sojika, 2017). The following contextual factors are discussed in the next section, the principal's school community involvement, SMT's workload, lack of internal and external support.

### **3.4.1 Principal's school community involvement**

The school principals play an essential role in the implementation of instructional programmes in schools. According to Neumerski (2012:313) "there is still so much to be learned about how instructional leaders interact in a specific context to improve teaching and learning". In this study, HoDs are examined as they interact with teachers during the processes of professional development to improve teaching and learning.

In recent evidence, Hands (2015) suggests that principals are now involved in the school community, which involves churches, local businesses and parents. The opportunities for school community involvement are essential and critical (ibid). The opportunities include initiatives conducted in concert with local colleges and universities, businesses, churches, and a variety of other entities (ibid). However, typical examples of community involvement include, and are not limited to, breakfast and afterschool programmes. School principals appreciate such initiatives, and they are fully participating in such programmes (Hauseman, Pollock & Wang, 2017). However, the major problem is that the school community programme takes away or limits the implementation of instructional leadership and classroom visits from the principals as instructional leaders (Hauseman, Pollock & Wang, 2017). In other words, schools principals focus more on school-community programmes than supporting teachers and learners in the school curriculum and other school activities.

Hauseman et al., (2017) in a study on Impact and Essential School-Community Involvement on Principals' Work and Workload, findings reveal that school principals appreciate the importance of school community involvement. However, they complain that it is limiting their time for instructional leadership and classroom visits. As indicated by Spillane (2015); Hands (2014); Gregoric and Owens, (2015), school community involvement can be viewed as part of instructional

leadership if it involves supporting student achievement and other positive outcomes. It is clear from the above statement that instructional leadership will not become effective if school community involvement limits its implementation. In South Africa, principals are also expected to be working with and for the community as the critical area of principalship (DBE, 2015). The school principal may work with the entire community such as SMT, SGB as well as the community around the school. The community expects a positive outcome from the school, in terms of learner achievement. The support from the community may lead to positive learner achievements. However, learners may achieve better results due to the support of the community. The DBE in South Africa, released a policy on South African school principals, National Education Policy Act (NEPA, 27/1996) and from the policy, school principals are expected to know and they need to take action concerning working with and for the community (DBE, 2016).

### **3.4.2 SMT's workload**

Based on my experience as a former teacher and HoD, the schools' principal workload can affect the proper implementation of instructional leadership programmes. In my view, school principals are faced with a lot of workload and accountability from National, Provincial, District, Circuit and school level, respectively. I assume that the flow of information from the Education Ministers office through different levels of the system, affect the school principal and add more unnecessary workload. System-level micromanagement and compliance focus increase workload for the wrong reasons (Hauseman et al., 2017). The Education Act that governs schooling "also indicates that principals are responsible for everything that happens in their schools" (Hauseman, Pollock & Wang, 2017:86).

The workload of the school principal is increasing with demands and time. According to Haim, Chanina, Shmuel, Rachel and Zaretsky, (2016), previously school principals were responsible for the safety of learners and ensuring that teachers' work schedules were up to date, as well as implementing school policies and doing managerial tasks. The above scholars also argue that currently, school principals are expected to play a role of instructional leader and ensure that proper teaching and learning is promoted in school for student's academic success. It is argued by Glanz (2013); DiPaola and Hoy (2008); Klar, Huggins and Roessler (2016) that the most chief responsibility of the school principal is to be an instructional leader. Schools' principals are expected to lead and manage instructional changes.

In SA, some policies and frameworks govern school principals. Their work is also inherited by many policies such as South African educational legislation and policy on labour law and its application in the school context (DBE, 2015). Other members of SMT are also faced with heavy workloads. In the foundation phase, most HoDs do administrative duties, management duties and teaching. In this study, it is imperative to understand the role played by HoDs in the foundation phase in terms of supporting and managing teacher professional development.

### **3.4.3 Lack of internal and external support**

In South Africa, public schools work within the confines of departmental policies and legislations. Public schools cannot function on their own, cannot make their policies and make decisions without the consultation of the SGB, Circuit, district, province and National Department of Education. It is against this background that public schools expect internal and external support in curriculum implementation as well as school administration. There are always amendments in the curriculum, and schools need to implement those changes without fail. For the proper implementation of curriculum and positive learning outcomes, training and support for teachers from external sources will make it possible to achieve excellent results in schools. SMT need to implement instructional leadership in terms of curriculum delivery, visiting teachers in their classroom to ensure that teaching and learning take place daily, as part of instructional leadership.

During the introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), the provincial department was mandated by the minister of education to train all teachers on the implementation of CAPS. The training was conducted, and teachers were capacitated on the use of the CAPS document and how to support learners in terms of the curriculum (DBE, 2012). However, three to five days' training was not enough for teachers to grasp everything from the CAPS document and training. Follow-up visits were expected from the trainers (subject advisers, curriculum implementers, deputy chief educational specialist) to ensure the proper implementation of the curriculum. Based on my experience as HoD, SMT members were not capacitated on how to monitor the implementation of CAPS curriculum; hence they [SMT] also expect support from the national, provincial Department of Education on instructional leadership for the proper implementation of the CAPS curriculum. The study findings show that there was no support for HoDs on how to support teachers in curriculum management and their management roles. During the interviews, HoDs revealed that they receive support from NGOs during management workshops.

Nkambule and Amsterdam's (2018) study on the realities of educator support in a South African school district, reveals that participants appreciate the support they receive from within the school and external. However, the said participants were concerned about the planning for teacher development which frequently disrupts instructional time (ibid). This study also reveals that instructional time was affected because district officials conducted most of the training or workshops during tuition time. Apart from the support that takes time away from teaching, there are also concerns raised by teachers on subject advisers who convene meetings or workshops with teachers. One teacher from Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) study, reported that their subject adviser lacks knowledge on content matters. The teacher added that workshops are conducted without distracting their time on tasks, but the workshop does not bear any fruit and teachers are unable to implement what they learned. Lack of district support was also identified in the US by some school principals who claim that they are no longer comfortable with their job and the lack of support from the district (Alvoid & Black, 2014).

According to Sojika (2017), the literature reveals that teachers were also concerned about the support of school principals in terms of class visits. The school principals will visit the classroom during teaching time, but no feedback was provided to teachers on the findings during the class visit. In this study, class visits were identified as the activity of professional development; HoDs were seen visiting teachers in their classroom to monitor and support teaching and learning. Thereafter, HoDs provide teachers with feedback on the findings during class visits. Sojika (2017) reported that even in the supervision book, there would be indications that the principal visited the classroom, but no comments for the teacher to improve on good work identified. "Principals' participation in and support for the professional learning of teachers can strengthen the capacity of teachers as well as build their confidence that they can make a difference" (Al-Mahdy et al., 2018:198). Similarly, teachers and HoDs in the foundation phase raised concerns with the internal support wherein HoDs are unable to support teachers, as they are also full-time teachers and members of the SMT (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). This finding is consistent with that of research conducted by Bipath and Nkabinde (2015) and Blandford (2000), showing that HoDs in the foundation phase are faced with the dilemma of coping with the competing demands of their administrative duties and teaching responsibilities.

Mpungose and Ngwenya (2017:3) argue, "the sole criterion in judging performance is often the pass rate in NSC examinations". In addition, Mpungose and Ngwenya (ibid) report, "like private sector organisations, schools are judged on the narrowly defined criterion of "results" and the complex

contextual factors which impede the attainment of sound educational goals are often ignored or underplayed”. I align with Mpungose and Ngwenya as per her observation and experience as a foundation phase teacher; the complex contextual factors are ignored at an early stage of the foundation phase.

There are several contextual factors in this phase that are ignored. For example, lack of managing and supporting teacher professional development in all subjects taught in the foundation phase. For this study, HoDs in the foundation phase were examined whether they support and manage teachers’ professional development, to improve learner attainment in the foundation phase as well as improve the quality of teaching and learning. The next section looks at the additional factors that influence instructional leadership effectiveness.

### **3.4.4 Additional factors that influence instructional leadership effectiveness**

Different researchers identified some factors that impede the implementation of instructional leadership in schools. In their views, Stronge (1988); Tsudu and Taylor (1995); Steyn and van Niekerk (2006); Sojika (2017) indicate that:

- It is a kind of leadership which is seldom practised in schools due to ignorance. Whitehead and Decker (2013) claim that there is a growing need for principals to be instructional leaders.
- Implementation problems that arise where the institution fails to formulate or to have a shared vision or clear goals and objectives.
- Inadequate implementation plans which fail to define tasks and responsibilities of the organisation in the school.
- Inadequate training of instructional leaders and teachers in handling instructional leadership roles.
- Lack of a healthy, manageable instructional leader to shepherd the development of the whole school as on many occasions, heads are appointed to headship without any preparation before they take charge of their new roles (Tsudu & Taylor, 1995).
- Disruptive student behaviour. This is when students organise strikes or boycotts in order to force authorities to accommodate their views.
- Administrative tasks where heads have several roles to play, which include instructional leadership roles.

- Teachers' negative behaviour such as absenteeism or lack of adequate preparation of lessons, refusal of teachers to be class visited or coming to school under the influence of liquor or the dissatisfaction of teachers with unfavourable working conditions or poor remuneration.
- Lack of recognition and incentives for teachers to develop their teaching skills and improve their effectiveness.

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

This framework began by exploring the instructional leadership theory. The chapter also focused on dimensions of instructional leadership skills by defining schools' mission and vision, management of instructional programmes, as well as developing a positive learning climate. Later, the chapter explored the characteristics of instructional leaders, and the focus was on the school principal and HoDs as instructional leaders. The final section of this chapter focused on the following contextual factors that influence instructional leadership's effectiveness: principal's school community involvement, SMTs' workload, as well as lack of internal and external support.

The next chapter describes the procedures, research design and methodology used in this investigation.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter mainly focuses on the presentation of the research design and methodology. The chapter starts by giving an overview of the research approach adopted and the design employed. This chapter employed a qualitative case study research method and procedures to investigate the management of teacher professional development in the foundation phase by HoDs. Next, the study looks at sampling selection, and the focus is on setting selection and participation selection.

Methods of data collection were then looked at, and two methods were employed; that is interviews and document analysis. The next topic after data collection is data analysis; the process involves coding, categorising, and looking for recurring patterns, similarities, inconsistencies or contradictions. The chapter also deals with trustworthiness, and the focus is on credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. Lastly, it is within the framework of this chapter to present a brief synopsis of how I paid particular attention to the critical concepts of research validity and the notion of research ethics.

#### **4.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM**

The study is embedded within the interpretivist paradigm. Creswell (2009) defines interpretivist paradigm as the paradigm that is geared towards understanding the phenomenon from an individual perspective, investigating the interaction between individuals, as well as the historical and cultural context in which people live. In this study, the management of teacher professional development by foundation phase HoDs is interpreted concerning the support provided by HoDs on teacher professional development and the support received by teachers in terms of acquiring new skills, new knowledge on the subject content as well as job experience and performance. Scotland (2012) argues that interpretive methods give insight and understanding of behaviour, explain actions from the participant's point of view, and do not dominate participants. For interpretivists, the world is too complex to be reduced to a set of observed laws and generalisations are less critical than understanding the real circumstances behind reality (Gray, 2004). Through open-ended interviews with HoDs and teachers in the foundation phase, I generated qualitative data. The next sub-section discusses the ontological and epistemological assumptions as the philosophical lens for this study.

### ***A. Ontology***

The ontological assumption is defined by Scotland (2012) and Kgwete (2014) as what constitutes reality, the theory of existence, of what is there, why and how. Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) also claim that ontology refers to the underlying assumption of the nature of reality that must be studied, and what may be known about the assumption we make about the nature of reality. The ontological assumption of this study is that teachers in South African public schools participate in various activities of teacher professional development. The activities of TPD refer to a wide range of activities in which teachers participate and play an active role (Borko, Jacobs & Koellner, 2010). For this study, the following examples of professional development activities were explored: coaching, mentoring, classroom observations, class visits, lesson study as well as collaboration. However, Creswell (2007) argues that ontological issues relate to the nature of reality and its characteristics.

### ***B. Epistemology***

The epistemological assumption, as defined by Kgwete (2014:101), is “concerned with knowledge, the generation of knowledge, how knowledge can be acquired and communicated with others”. There must be an understanding of the issues from the point of view of those being investigated and their circumstances (Kgwete, 2014). The epistemological assumption of this study was through interactions with experienced foundation phase HoDs who manage teacher professional development in their schools and foundation phase teachers, who corroborated or refuted the realities.

Epistemology refers to the allegations made about how knowledge can be gained from reality, and what can be considered knowledge and standards to be considered knowledge rather than mere opinions and beliefs (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015).

## **4.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN**

A qualitative research approach was used to answer the following research question, how do HoDs in the foundation phase support and manage teacher professional development? In a qualitative study, a researcher enquires about such topics as how people experience an event, a series of events, and a condition (Agee, 2009). Qualitative research designs or approaches are “as diverse as sources of qualitative data” (Mathipa & Gumbo, 2015:135). The qualitative research design and approach was selected as opposed to the quantitative approach because the qualitative approach is “flexible enough to make adjustments during data collection, as supplementary questions may be formulated during



data collection to gather additional data. On the other hand, the quantitative approach is not flexible and is usually difficult to follow-up on promising hunches” ( Mathipa & Gumbo, 2015:134).

The study employed a qualitative case study research method and procedures to investigate the management of teacher professional development in the foundation phase by HoDs. According to Kgwete (2014), in qualitative research, the main goal is to expand knowledge of the human condition and promote better self-understanding. Through this study, I was able to understand the perception and experiences of teachers and HoDs on teachers’ professional development. This also promoted a better understanding for the participants and I. Kgwete (2014) adds that different research designs have their meanings, but the qualitative research method is excellent because it assists researchers to understand meanings people attach to a social phenomenon. The above statement by Kgwete is supported by Agge (2009) when she indicates that, “Qualitative inquiries involve asking the kinds of questions that focus on the why and how of human interactions”.

A case study was selected as the most appropriate design for this study. Rule and John (2011) define a case study as a popular approach that allows researchers to develop and present an in-depth view of a particular situation, event or entity. McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 24) support the above statement that a case study examines a bounded system, or a case, over time, in-depth, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting. In this study, HoDs and teachers’ perspectives on the management of professional development are the phenomena that were examined in-depth.

Case studies are those wherein the researcher explores in-depth a programme, event, activity, process, individual or more. The case (issues) is time-limited and activity-specific, and researchers gather detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a continuous period (Stake, 1995). HoDs and teachers were the cases. Yin (2014) identified six sources that could be used as evidence in a case study. The sources are, namely: documents, direct observation, interviews, archival records, participant observation and physical artefacts. In this study, semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used as the sources of evidence, allowing data triangulation.

#### **4.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY**

The population of this study comprised HoDs and teachers in the foundation phase from four identified schools in the Mpumalanga Province. The HoDs and teachers were purposively sampled (Yin, 2014), which means that the sample was selected deliberately in order to increase the chance of getting the most relevant and plentiful data in the area of study (Yin, 2011). Participants were purposively sampled based on their potential to provide rich and relevant information (Etikan, Musa

& Alkassim, 2016); particularly as participants. Their qualities included knowledge, skills and experience in the primary school, foundation phase, which could provide in-depth information about the topic under investigation. The knowledge and skills such as pastoral care, giving directions to staff and building of commitment and confidence relate to the descriptors as contained in the performance of the Standard 9 development appraisal instrument used in the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). The IQMS is an integrated system consisting of three programmes. These are development appraisal, performance management and whole school evaluation aimed at enhancing and monitoring the effectiveness of the education system (ELRC, 2003).

#### **4.4.1 The study sample**

The population of this study comprised of HoDs and teachers from four primary schools. Primary schools have three phases, and these are the foundation phase, intermediate phase, as well as the senior phase. The research focused on developing a population from the foundation phase as the basis and an important phase that helps learners develop their reading, writing and thinking skills. A sample of eight HoDs and four foundation phase teachers was purposely and conveniently selected from four primary schools in Emalahleni Circuit 2, Nkangala District, Mpumalanga Province to participate in the study. Schools in Quintile 1 to 3 are no-fee schools, which means parents do not pay school fees (DBE, 1996). All four schools are no fee-paying schools and are regarded as feeder schools to excellent performing high schools in that circuit. The four schools in the sample are from the same socio-economic background. The schools are situated in one township of Emalahleni and accommodate learners from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Research conducted by Du Plessis on South African HoDs on their role in teacher development (2016), confirms that unexpected patterns which were uncovered, challenge the assumption that teacher development is more likely to occur in well-resourced schools than in under-resourced schools. Hence, the study sought to understand ‘how’ teacher professional development is managed in under-resourced schools. As indicated above, most ex-model C schools are well resourced in terms of buildings, facilities, human resource as well as curriculum and management resources. However, some under-resourced schools lack some of the facilities mentioned above. This study explored the support received by teachers from HoDs in under-resourced schools.

#### **4.4.2 Participation selection**

In this qualitative research study, I utilised purposeful and convenience sampling techniques. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability or non-random sampling where individuals from

the target population who meet specific practical criteria such as accessibility, geographical proximity at a given time or willingness to participate in the study, are included (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). The purposive sampling technique, also called judgement sampling, is the deliberate selection of the participants because of their characteristics (ibid). The research participants were chosen because they had the knowledge and were involved in the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2013). The intention of selecting these schools is because they are the feeder primary schools to excellent performing high schools in this circuit (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015).

I intended to interview eight foundation phase HoDs and four foundation phase teachers. However, in total, seven HoDs and five teachers were interviewed. In school A, two teachers were interviewed instead of two HoDs because the second HoD had retired a month before the data collection commenced. In school B, one HoD for foundation phase was admitted in hospital, so the HoD for intermediate and senior phase was interviewed. The intersen HoD was selected and interviewed because she was redeployed from the foundation phase to the intermediate phase. Whereas, in school D, the school consisted of one foundation phase HoD and one senior teacher placed in the foundation phase. According to the PAM document, the functions and duties of the senior teacher are almost the same as the functions and duties of the HoD. Hence, in school D, the senior teacher, one HoD and one teacher were interviewed. Conducting interviews with seven HoDs and five teachers did not change the objectives of the study. All four participating schools are in one district and one circuit, and in one township that has similar socio-economic challenges.

The following inclusion criteria assisted in the selection of participants:

- Seven HoDs with three years' experience of teaching in the foundation phase. These HoDs are responsible for the management of teachers and learners in the foundation phase.
- Five teachers with three years' experience of teaching in the foundation phase. These teachers are responsible for teaching Grade 1 to Grade 3 learners.
- All the above participants were prepared to participate in the interview processes, which included follow-up interviews to enable the researcher to gain a perspective on the phenomenon under investigation.

The school principal assisted in selecting Post Level 1 teachers. The rationale for asking the principals to select the Post Level 1 teachers was to avoid selecting “quiet, uncooperative or

inarticulate individuals” (Shenton, 2004:65). The HoDs were identified by virtue of their positions and Post Level 1 teachers were identified based on their knowledge and requisite experience on matters of support in their schools. Thus, the assumption is that all the participants selected were knowledgeable about the subject being studied; hence they were able to give in-depth information that may assist other under-resourced schools that are unable to implement TPD. The experienced HoDs and teachers from the identified four under-resourced schools were interviewed in their respective schools. The schools provided venues for the interviews.

Teachers and HoDs had different teaching experiences, teaching all foundation phase classes, respectively. Most HoDs interviewed had more than five years’ experience as teachers and foundation phase HoDs, while other HoDs were only six months as foundation phase HoDs. Out of seven HoDs interviewed, four HoDs had more than five years’ experience, and three HoDs had six months experience in management.

The next section focuses on methods of data collection, and the focus is on interviews and document analysis.

## **4.5 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

This section describes the data collection instruments utilised for this study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that the goal of the data collection phase is to find sources of information to create detailed descriptions. The data collection instruments for this study include qualitative instruments such as semi-structured interviews and review of documents. The next sub-section elaborates on the data collection process.

### **4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews**

Interviews, as defined by Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014), are a valuable source of information that allows the researcher to interpret and understand the meaning of participants’ answers to specific questions. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) argue that interviews could be an essential strategy for data collection or a natural consequence of observation strategies. There are many types of interviews used in research. However for this study, semi-structured interviews were utilised. The semi-structured interview is a type of interview that “typically uses an interview protocol that serves as a guide and a starting point for the interview process” (Hays & Singh 2012: 239). HoDs and teachers in the foundation phase were interviewed individually regarding their experiences and perceptions regarding the management and support in terms of teacher professional

development. Hays and Singh (2012) indicate that in the semi-structured interview, the sequence and pace of the interview questions can change. These kinds of interviews also allow probing questions for further elaborations and clarifications (ibid). Teachers and HoDs were interviewed, and probing questions were posed for further elaborations and clarifications.

I used in-depth interviews that are defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:44) as open response questions for participants' meaning; how individuals perceive their world and how they explain or understand essential events in their lives. An in-depth interview is a qualitative way to collect data that allows one to ask participants questions in order to learn more about their opinions, views and beliefs about a particular phenomenon (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). According to Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) "in-depth interviews can also be used to explore interesting areas for further investigation". In other words, teachers and HoDs may raise issues of interest during the interview process, and the researcher may ask more in-depth questions to allow more flexibility (ibid). Information obtained through in-depth interviewing can only be qualitative (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2014).

An interview schedule, consisting of a specific set of open-ended questions, was used to allow the participants to express their thoughts during the interviews. In an open-ended question, the same questions are asked of all interviewees (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2014). The information obtained can be analysed more efficiently, and this format allows one to compare feedback on participants' views and opinions in a more structured way (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). HoDs and teachers were interviewed in their respective schools, at a place conducive for interviews. In other words, a place with fewer disturbances. All the interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. All participants signed the consent forms.

One session of interviews per participant was conducted. Individual teachers' interviews consisted of ten questions. Two examples of questions asked of teachers and HoDs are: 1. what kind of support do teachers receive from HoDs in terms of professional development? 2. Do HoDs receive support from other SMT members on the implementation of TPD? Interviews typically lasted 30 minutes to 1 hour. In some cases, more than one hour per interview was expected (Singh et al., 2012).

The interviews were voice recorded to provide a precise record to obtain specific details from the participants, to be able to listen and check them several times for participants to verify their precise comments. Even though a voice recorder was used, I also took notes for further clarity than cutting the participants off amid their responses. Two or three days were required for transcription and

review of each interview before storing on a CD and an electronic folder. After the transcription of interviews, follow-up interviews were conducted to confirm that the information transcribed was correct and that the context remained true.

#### **4.5.2 Document analysis**

Official documents or instruments were used in schools for several reasons. Some schools use instruments or tools for managing, monitoring and evaluation, which are noted by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) as “internal papers used for informal or official perspectives within the organisation”. The documents such as the school improvement plan, subject improvement plan usually ask different intervention strategies that are used by teachers and SMT members for proper curriculum management. Schedules or programmes for teacher professional development are also used to manage or support teachers by SMT members. On the schedule, the time and date for TPD are indicated.

The three kinds of internal documents or tools, which are the school improvement plan, subject improvement plan and schedule of the programme for TPD were requested from the school principal of each school. The internally collected documents assisted me in understanding how the HoDs conduct TPD in schools, especially the foundation phase. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:361) argue that “internal documents can show the official chain of command and provide clues about leadership style and values”. The first document that is the school improvement plan was analysed to check how the school features TPD in the plan to improve teaching and learning. The second document, which is the subject improvement plan, assisted me in analysing whether teachers are developed in terms of improving subjects they are teaching in the foundation phase. The SIP indicated when and how teachers are developed. The last document, which is the schedule or programme used for TPD, was analysed in order to assist me in understanding the process used by HoDs in the foundation phase in managing and supporting the teachers on TPD. The next section focuses on data analysis.

#### **4.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data is in the form of text and analysis and involves the deconstruction of text data into manageable categories, patterns and relationships (Neuman, 1997; Mouton, 2002). The qualitative analysis of this research aimed to examine the various elements of the captured data, to clarify concepts and constructs and to identify patterns, themes and relationships according to the research purpose. Undoubtedly, data analysis is the most complex and mysterious of all stages of the

qualitative project, one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in literature (Thorne, 1997).

In this study, I had to interpret the interviewees' (participants) creation of knowledge of understanding the situation, including their attitudes, values and beliefs. In other words, through interviews, I was able to interpret how HoDs in the foundation phase understand their roles of managing TPD and teachers' attitudes towards the support of TPD by their HoDs.

The qualitative researcher is expected to draw upon multiple (at least two) sources of evidence, that is, to seek convergence and corroboration using different data sources and methods (Bowen, 2009). Hence in this section, my focus was on data analysis for both interviews and documents analysis. The data collected from the interviews and documents were subjected to content analysis. Leedy and Ormrod (2013:148) define content analysis as "a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material to identify patterns, themes, or biases." Bowen (2009) argues that content analysis is the process of organising information in categories related to the central issues of research.

The process involved coding, categorising, looking for recurring patterns, similarities, inconsistencies or contradictions. The above process was applied to both interviews and document analysis. The voice-recorded data were transcribed, and listened to repeatedly. Member checking was done by verifying with all participants. Each data segment or unit was considered against the overarching question of how HoDs in the foundation phase support teacher professional development and how teachers experience that support (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Codes were then assigned to the specific units or segments of related meaning that was identified in the transcripts. The codes were categorised to establish the emergent nature of themes, trends and patterns that were cross-referenced with the research questions to ensure that I did not lose focus.

The analysis process was further informed by probing questions aimed at identifying thematic relationships between the various categories. The qualitative analysis process was concluded with a description of the thematic relationships and patterns that emerged. The categories, patterns and emerging themes were then linked to the research questions and discussed in relation to the relevant literature. The theoretical framework was also used during data analysis.

The next section focuses on the issues of trustworthiness.

## **4.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

Trustworthiness, as indicated by Guba (1981), entails credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. The author further explains that there are actions to be implemented that lead to credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Researchers should demonstrate integrity and efficiency in qualitative research by adhering to detail and accuracy to ensure the correctness and trustworthiness of the search process (Tobin & Begley, 2004; Twycross & Shields, 2005). In this study, trustworthiness was achieved by means of triangulation of different data sources; that is interviews and documents analysis.

### **4.7.1 Credibility**

Credibility refers to the truth of the data or the participant views and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2012). “Credibility is enhanced by the researcher describing his or her experiences as a researcher and verifying the research findings with the participants” (Diane, 2014:89). It is also increased by making use of triangulation, where more than one research method is used to collect the data (Collis & Hussey, 2003). In this study, interviews and documents analysis were the methods used to collect the data.

The verification of the transcribed data of the teachers’ interviews improved the credibility of data in the study. To ensure credibility, prolonged engagement was used. Each interview lasted 30-60 minutes, and member checking was used after transcribing. I went back to the participants to verify the data. In this study, during the data analysis participants were given the interview transcript to check for accuracy and appropriate interpretation of what they said. Data, recordings, notes and texts were extensively handled to show clear links between statements and interpretation.

It is crucial to indicate that I was previously a provincial official in the Mpumalanga Department of Education, and have since changed my job to being an official in the National Department of Education (DoE). As the departmental official, I am familiar with the education system. There was a possibility that my presence could make some teachers and HoDs feel uncomfortable. I planned to meet all the participants before data collection. I explained that I would collect data as a researcher and not as a departmental official. I also explained to them the processes and procedures of data collection and that they should remain comfortable and open when responding to interview questions. Consequently, during the interview process, I remained objective and unbiased



#### **4.7.2 Dependability**

Dependability refers to the constancy of the data over similar conditions (Polit & Beck, 2012; Tobin & Begley, 2004). This can be achieved when another researcher concurs with the decision trails at each stage of the research process. Through the researcher's process and descriptions, a research study would be deemed dependable if the findings were replicated with similar participants in similar conditions (Koch, 2006). According to Collis and Hussey (2003:278-279), dependability refers to "the quality of the process of integration that takes place between the data collection method, data analysis and the theory generated from the data". I also conducted checks to ensure the effectiveness of the methods used in the field and their related challenges (Bowen, 2009; Li, 2004).

#### **4.7.3 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data represent the participants' responses and not the researcher's biases or viewpoints (Polit & Beck, 2012; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Diane (2014:89) indicates that the "researcher could demonstrate confirmability by describing how conclusions and interpretations were established, and exemplifying that the findings were derived directly from the data". In reporting qualitative research, this can be exhibited by providing rich quotes from the participants that depict each emerging theme. Quotes from the participants were highly considered in this study. To reach conclusions, I checked whether the research objectives had been achieved, and questions answered. I also checked if the study's goal had been achieved.

#### **4.7.4 Transferability**

Transferability refers to findings that can be applied to other settings or groups (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Polit & Beck, 2012). A qualitative study meets this criterion if the results have meaning to individuals not involved in the study, and readers can associate the results with their own experiences. Researchers should provide sufficient information on the participants and the research context to enable the reader to assess the findings' capability of being "fit" or transferable (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Polit & Beck, 2012).

Since this is a case study with a small sample, the findings will not be generalised to the larger population of teachers and HoDs, but rather the insight generated will be applied to cases of a similar nature (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). This implies that the findings of this study might apply to other teachers and HoDs from other primary schools in the same vicinity as the teachers and HoDs who

participated in the study (Kekana, 2016). The HoDs and foundation phase teachers of Emalahleni two circuit may benefit from this study. This indicates the extent to which results can be applied in other contexts or with other participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

The next section focuses on this study's ethical considerations.

## **4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Understanding the ethical and legal responsibilities in conducting research is necessary since most educational research deals with human beings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010: 117). A letter from the University of South Africa Ethics Committee, as a notification to continue with the fieldwork, was obtained. Further permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Mpumalanga Department of Education. Permission to interview teachers and HoDs was obtained from school principals. Finally, teachers and HoDs signed the consent forms to participate in the study. I considered voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants before conducting the study. I was open and honest about the purpose of the study, as indicated by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) that "researchers should generally be open and honest with participants about all aspects of the study".

In order to obtain the teachers' and HoDs' consent and voluntary participation, the purpose and the goal of the research was explained to them. The participants were informed that they may withdraw from the research at any time, and that confidentiality and anonymity would be observed during and after the research was concluded.

### **4.8.1 Informed consent**

Informed consent implies that the "participants must give their consent to participate in the study" (Creswell 2003:64). I informed the participants of the purpose, nature, methods of data collection, and extent of the research before its commencement. Further, I explained to the participants their typical roles. In line with this, I obtained the participants' informed consent in writing.

#### **4.8.1.1 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity**

In this study, I ensured that the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained through the removal of any identifying characteristics before widespread dissemination of information. I made it clear that the participants' "names will not be used for any other purposes, nor will information be shared that reveals their identity in any way". The names of the

participants and schools are not mentioned in this report. The data collected from the participants was saved in password-protected files and stored on the personal computers of both my supervisor and me.

#### **4.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Limitations, as described by Enslin (2014:275), are “ constraints or limits in your research study that are out of your control, such as time, financial resources, access to information, and so on”. The fact that this is an exploratory study on foundation phase teachers’ professional development and included five teachers and seven HoDs from the same circuit and same district could have limited the scope of the study. Participating teachers and HoDs are from the same demographic area, with the same socio-economic background. Therefore, the findings of the study cannot be generalised to all foundation phase HoDs and teachers in Mpumalanga Province. In other words, the study allowed for future research and investigation.

The purpose of this study was to record accurate information and unfiltered voices of teachers. I stayed as credible as possible as a researcher, by verifying the transcribed data of teachers’ interviews. I also did constant member checking with participants to ensure the authentic interpretation of what they said.

#### **4.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on the research design and methodology and used the ontological and epistemological assumptions as research paradigms. The chapter started by giving an overview of the research paradigm and different definitions from researchers and scholars on ontological and epistemological assumptions. It then examined the research design and research methods. Sampling selection, setting and participation selections were explored and discussed. The two methods of data collection utilised were interviews and the review of documents. The study then focused on data analysis. Aspects of trustworthiness were then discussed which included, credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. Finally, the study looked at ethical considerations.

The next chapter dwells on the main findings, which comprise the discussion on teachers’ understanding of their professional development, what shapes that understanding and what types of professional development support these teachers’ understanding and what types of professional development support these teachers’ needs and what they believe they need.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter mainly focuses on the presentation of the data analysis and findings. I generated qualitative data through open-ended questions with HoDs and foundation phase teachers. The main question of this study was to understand the management and support of teacher professional development by foundation phase HoDs in the Mpumalanga Province. Interviews and document analysis were the two sources that were used as evidence of the case study, as indicated by Yin (2014). The first section presents the data and the themes that emerged from the data. The second section discusses all themes and sub-themes from the data.

#### **5.2 DATA PRESENTATION**

In this study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. I used a voice recorder to record the responses from the participants. All voice recorded interviews were transcribed and coded using the constant comparative method of data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The data collected from the interviews were triangulated with data from the document analysis. The interview questions were from both literature and sub-questions. Four themes emerged from the interview data. Theme (1) was on the professional development activities that are implemented in the foundation phase. This theme emerged from the interview question and literature. This question sought to understand the activities that are performed in the foundation phase to support teachers in their professional development.

Theme (2) was on the benefits of TPD and its influence on teachers' practices. This theme refers to the teachers' knowledge of improvement due to TPD. Theme (3) was the teachers' perceptions on their professional development; this theme sought to understand the perceptions of teachers on the professional development conducted by their HoDs. In other words, it was to enquire if teachers perceive the support as lacking or adequate? Theme (4) was on the support received by HoDs in implementing TPD; this last theme emerged from the interview questions, and it relates to the different support received by HoDs during or in the process of implementing teacher professional development. Below is the biographical information of foundation phase HoDs and teachers.

**Figure: 5.2. Biographical information of foundation phase HoDs and teachers**

Participants	Phase	Gender	Years in the post	Site
Teacher 1	Foundation	Female	29	School A
Teacher 2	Foundation	Female	13	School A
Teacher 3	Foundation	Female	07	School B
Teacher 4	Foundation	Female	16	School C
Teacher 5	Foundation	Female	27	School D
HoD 1	Foundation	Female	06	School A
HoD 2	Foundation	Female	6 months	School B
HoD 3	Intersen	Female	6 months	School B
HoD 4	Foundation	Female	06	School C
HoD 5	Foundation	Female	06 months	School C
HoD 6	Foundation	Female	24	School D
HoD 7	Foundation	Female	12	School D

## **5.2 DATA ANALYSIS**

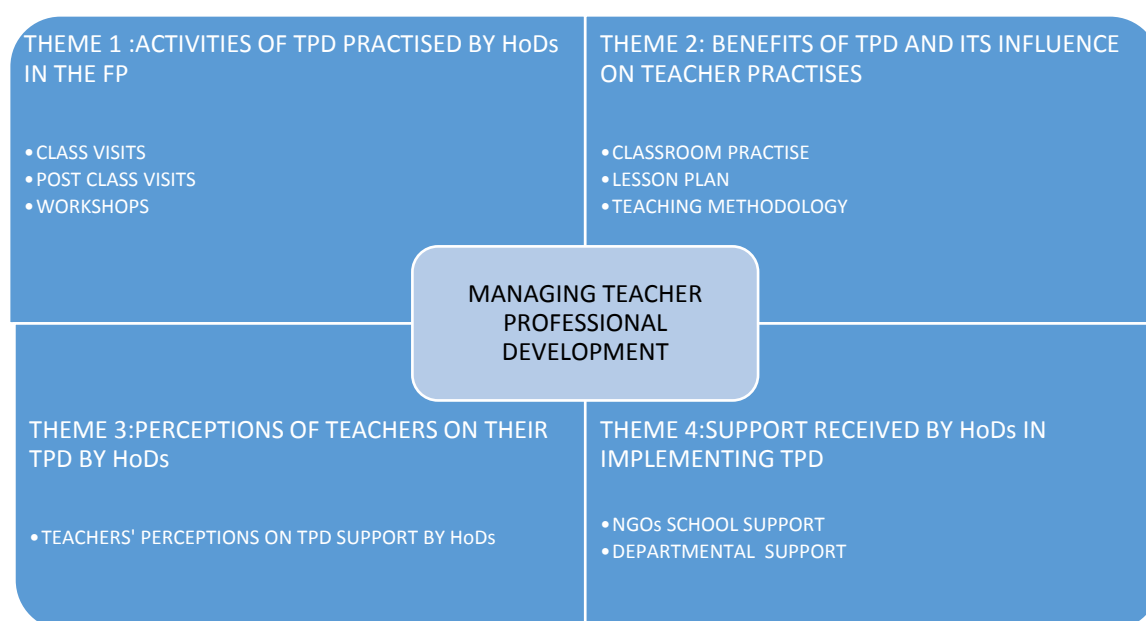
The analysis was guided by the following questions:

1. What activities of teacher professional development do HoDs engage in to support foundation phase teachers?
2. What are the benefits of teacher professional development and its influence on teacher practices?
3. How do teachers perceive the support of their TPD by these HoDs?
4. What kind of support do these HoDs receive in order to be able to manage TPD in this phase?

## **5.3 THEMES EMERGING FROM THE DATA**

Qualitative data were collected and analysed to gain more in-depth information regarding the managing of teacher professional development by foundation phase HoDs and to answer the main research question: How do the foundation phase HoDs of Mpumalanga Province manage and support teacher professional development? The themes that emerged are summarised in the figure below:

**Figure 5.4: Themes of findings as identified in data**



### **5.3.1 Theme 1: Professional development activities implemented in the foundation phase**

Teachers were asked, during the interviews, on the activities that are implemented for their professional development. This theme is divided into sub-themes. The first and the most common sub-theme that emerged from the data was the class visits. The second sub-theme was post-class visits, where HoDs give feedback to teachers about their [HoDs] findings during lesson presentation. The third sub-theme was workshops that teachers and HoDs attended for their TPD. The three sub-themes are presented below.

#### **5.3.1.1 Class visit as an activity of TPD**

HoDs perceived class visits as an activity to identify development needs and support teacher professional development. In this sub-theme, I wanted to understand if the class visit is a tool to identify teacher development needs and the methods they follow to identify these needs. From the data, there are two types of class visits, namely: planned and unplanned class visits. Firstly, I will analyse the planned class visits from all the schools, followed by unplanned class visits. Secondly, the analysis will focus on the purpose of class visits conducted by HoDs in the foundation phase. All the participants' responses are reported verbatim and presented in italics.

In school A, when asked about how and when HoDs conduct class visits, Teacher 2 responded:

*In 2018, the retired HoD conducted class visit, and it was announced, there was a time table available about who will be visited and the time.*

Teacher 2 claimed that class visits were conducted in 2018, and it was planned. However, the above teacher indicated that there were no class visits in 2019. In contrast, HoD 1 of School A, based on data collected, refuted the claim from Teacher 2, by indicating that:

*I check the calendar, call all the foundation phase teachers, then we agree on the date and time to conduct class visits. I have to take into cognisance that I also have a class to teach. I have many teachers to visits, and I always make arrangements with teachers to look after my learners, when I am conducting class visits*

The data reveal that the HoD conducts class visits, and it is planned class visits with the consultation of teachers. From the HoD's response, it was clear that the HoD has pressure of conducting class visit as well as teaching her class. Teacher 1 of School A concurred that HoDs conduct class visits. However, she did not indicate whether the class visits were planned or unplanned. To support her claim, Teacher 1 of School A, responded like this:

*yes, when they are coming to class for the ...for the class visit, is indeed, they....they normally having a....they will have a report after your presentation in the classroom and thereafter they will call you and then you will talk to each other about the problems that the HoDs think you are having when you are presenting*

The data reveal that HoDs conduct class visits and the purpose of the visits is to observe lesson presentation. Teacher 1 also added that there was a discussion between the HoD and the teacher after the class visits. Similarly, in School B, the data show that HoDs conduct class visits they are planned. Teacher 3 of School B responded about class visits like this:

*At the beginning of the year, we get the planning of class visit, including the time, before she comes to the class, you need to prepare the learners books and workbooks, we get the template of what she will be looking for when she comes to class*

The collected data from Teacher 3 indicate that HoDs conduct class visits. In addition, they are planned. This planning is even specific about time, as well as the purpose of the visit. The teacher also indicated that the template, as the guideline, is also shown to teachers before the class visit. HoD 2 of School B, was in congruence with Teacher 3 of School B about the planned class visits. When asked about how and when they conduct class visits, HoD 2 responded in this manner:

*We are planning, we are having a yearly schedule for that, yes, so each and every term, we do have the class visits, yes, we plan as SMT, then we go to the teachers to deliver the information, we give them the programme of the year,*

Data show that SMT members share the programme for class visits with teachers as indicated by Teacher 3 of School B. In addition, data from the documents' analysis also showed that there is a schedule for class visits. All three participants of School B, which is HoD 3, HoD 2 and Teacher 3 agreed about the support on school visits. The response from HoD 3 of School B, suggests that the focus of class visits was on lesson presentation; this is how she responded:

*we also have what we call a skills audit, after we conducted our classroom support visit and we sample a teacher who is good with a certain topic, and that teacher will be able to assist other teachers with that topic throughout the phase, even now we are busy with CPTD, we need to do something, like bring the outside world into the classroom*

The collected data from HoD 2 and HoD 3 of School B indicate that the purpose of class visits was on lesson presentation because HoD 3 indicated that, during the class visits, they sample a teacher who is good with a certain topic. Team teaching is used to assist other teachers. The data show that the school is implementing CPTD for teacher professional development. However, the data were unclear whether the class visit was planned or unplanned. Similarly, in School C, the collected data show that the purpose of class visits was to observe lesson presentation, as indicated by HoD 4 of School C, that as they conduct class visits, they become aware of the strength and weaknesses of teachers. When asked about how and when they conduct class visits, HoD 4 responded like this:

*"Eeehh...we start by doing class visits, that is where we start with our development, then we get the strength and the weaknesses of the teacher, then we develop a programme as to how we are going to....to develop them".*

The collected data from HoD 4 indicate that the purpose of these class visits was to identify teachers' developmental needs so that the HoD drafts the development programme based on her findings. As indicated earlier on, HoD 4 did not indicate whether the class visits were planned or not. However, HoD 5 from school C reported she has a management plan for class visits. This is how HoD 5 responded to the question of how and when they conduct class visits:

*"I am always having a management plan for my class visit, i.....each and every teacher must know, on this day I come to teacher number 1, on this day to teacher number 2, and what I want, I make them aware that I need..... learners books and I will check learners books, how did they mark, give feedback to learners."*



The above data reveal that HoD 5's class visit was mainly on learners' books. HoD 5 of School C also added that she checks whether teachers mark learners' books and provide feedback to learners. Teacher 4 of School C supported the claim that HoDs conduct school visits even though she did not indicate whether the class visits were planned or unplanned. In her response about how and when these visits are conducted, Teacher 4 of School C responded in this way:

*One day the HoD came for class visits to assess me for IQMS in Mathematics, then she discovered that most of the things I was doing during the presentation was incorrect, she came back to show me how to present the lesson correctly, she even call all the Grade 3 teachers to demonstrate to us on how to teach Mathematics.*

The data collected from Teacher 4 of school C showed that the class visits were on IQMS, and the focus was on Mathematics lesson observation. HoD 5 demonstrated to teachers on the correct method of teaching Mathematics. That is in line with IQMS in developing teachers on areas identified during the class visits or lesson observations. HoD 4 of School C, when asked about when and how she conducts class visits, responded like this:

*I have a year programme for foundation phase class visits and I always share the programme with teachers. Each teacher has a copy of class visit*

However, HoD 6 from School D indicated that she does class support and not class visits. She added that her purpose of going to the classroom is to support teachers and not police them. The data show that HoDs and teachers planned the class visits in all four schools. The school management plan on the class visits was reviewed in the document analysis. In School C, teachers and HoDs appended their signature in acknowledging the dates and times of the class visits.

During the interviews, teachers were asked about the unplanned class visits conducted by HoDs. In this question, I was keen to understand the readiness of teachers for classroom practice daily. According to the CAPS policy document, teachers have lesson plans to prepare, whether daily or weekly. Teachers in School C did not seem to have a problem with unplanned class visits. When asked about the unplanned visits conducted by HoDs, Teacher 4 of school C responded like this:

*"Yooooooo, sometimes they come unannounced, Sometimes I feel small, but as I told you that my new HoD is fine, so....yes....."*

From the above statement, Teacher 4 of School C indicated that she felt inferior about the unplanned visits, and she further praised her HoD. The above statement showed that Teacher 4 of School C did

not have a problem with unplanned visits. When asked about how they conduct unplanned class visits, HoD 4 of School C supported the claim of unplanned class visits, and she responded like this:

*MMhhhhhh.....since they are aware that we do sometimes do that, Yes.... they...at first they had a challenge with that but now they are use say at any time, the HoD can come and they do appreciate it now and I think that is where you are able to get the true reflection of what is happening in the class cos if it is a planned one, they prepare...prepare...and you find that everything is in order, only to find that it is not like that*

Teacher 3 of School B responded on the question of unplanned visits conducted by SMT members in her school as such:

*“As the teachers, you must always be prepared, yes I will be sad but because I must be prepared all the time, there is nothing wrong when they come unplanned”*

The above data indicate that this teacher is always ready to be visited, whether planned or unplanned. However, in the very same school, School B, some teachers were uncomfortable with the unplanned class visits. When asked about unplanned class visits, HoD 2 of School B responded like this:

*Usually they are fighting for unplanned visit, because you need to give them some time and notices, maybe you are planning to get in, but sometimes other teachers are using their periods for some other things, so you are not going to get what you are supposed to get, so that is why we are notifying them every time, so that they can prepare themselves, not just to bounce without announcing*

In School A and School D, teachers reported that there were no unplanned class visits in their schools. When asked about how and when HoDs conduct unplanned visits, this is how HoD 1 of School A put it:

*I don't do it because it causes many unnecessary fights, I prefer to consult with teachers first, before I visit them. I am scared that people might think, I am using the unplanned class visit as a weapon or I want to find faults*

The above data reveal that HoD 1 from School A is uncomfortable to conduct unplanned class visits. She added that she prefers to consult with teachers before the class visit support. All four schools submitted evidence about class visit schedules. All schools labelled their schedule of class visits differently. However, for this study, the schedule of class visits is considered as the programme of teacher professional development.

### 5.3.1.2 Post-class-visit support

The second activity of teacher professional development is post-class visit support. This type of activity emerged from interviews. This type of support takes place immediately after the lesson observation, as indicated above by HoD 4 and 5. As HoD 4 reported that after the lesson observation, she identifies development areas or gaps from the teacher, then she performs post-class visit support. In other words, the HoD does not wait for the development process or programme that is already in place. HoD 4 of School C, added that she sits down with the teacher after the lesson observation and discusses her findings with the hope of improvement, which she expects to be observed on the second class visit. HoD 4 responded like this:

*“At first, maybe I observe the lesson, then I go out, then in the afternoon I sit down with the teacher to say this is what I have picked up, maybe on that day, the teacher...Eeehhh.....let me say did not do well, but when we do face...one-on-one, she is able to see that I was supposed to do this, then on my second visit I expect to see the improvement”*

HoD 5 from the same school, School C, reinforced the claim of post-class visit support. She responded like this:

*“after doing any.....class visits, I make a meeting to discuss and then.....what I did observe from them and then I develop them when there is the needs”*

Depending on the school setting, HoDs execute the post-class visit support differently. Both HoDs in school C reported that after the class visits, they sit down and discuss with their teachers about their findings during class visits. However, Teacher 4 from the same school reported that after the class visits, her HoD involved other teachers after identifying professional development needs. Teacher 4 responded like this:

*One day the HoD came for class visits to assess me for IQMS in Mathematics, then she discovered that most of the things I was doing during the presentation was incorrect, she came back to show me how to present the lesson correctly, she even call all the Grade 3 teachers to demonstrate to us on how to teach Mathematics.*

The above data indicate that the HoD supports and develops Grade 3 teachers in teaching methodology. The class visits may take place during the IQMS period or any other time that is available at the school. Teachers may select dates to be visited by SMT members (DBE, 2003).

As indicated earlier on, the data show that the HoD did not wait for the development process. After the class visits, she conducted post-class visit support and demonstrated to all Grade 3 teachers on

how to teach Mathematics. Teacher 1 reported about the discussion during post-class visits support in this way:

*Yes, when they are coming to class for the ...for the class visit, is indeed, they....they normally having a.....they will have a report after your presentation in the classroom and thereafter they will call you and then you will talk to each other about the problems that the HoDs think you are having when you are presenting or whatever that's.....that's ....that is hindering maybe you in your progress, then we talk to each other about that and then she will start to develop you, yes, that is how they do it.*

The above data confirm that HoDs meet with the teachers after the lesson presentation as post-class visit support. The teacher added that the HoD guides her about her lesson presentation and the teacher indicated that, she is later developed. It appears as if the teacher received support from the HoD through the post-class visit support.

#### **5.3.1.3 Workshop as an activity of TPD**

The third sub-theme that emerged from the data is the workshops. Teachers attended workshops organised by the school, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as well as the DoE. The focus of this study is on internal or in-house workshops conducted for teachers by HoDs in their professional development. The data indicate that teachers are developed through workshops and training to become better teachers with skills and knowledge to improve classroom practices. The task of provincial and district officials is to develop the capacity among school leaders and maintain an effective system of in-school professional development (DBE, 2012). Based on the findings, workshops are conducted in schools, even if it is unclear from most participants how HoDs conduct workshops. HoD 1 from School A confirmed that she attends the workshop and conducts workshops within the school. She responded like this:

*“Yes, We always go to workshops, we also arrange workshops, and then we hold meetings, if there is new things that we found somewhere or when we attend workshops, we come back and make a report and also try to workshop our educators and involve ourselves with many activities that will make us move forward”*

Teachers indicated that they attend workshops at the school level. Teacher 4 of School C reported that the HoD conducted one-on-one training as well as group training. In this study, the term workshop is used interchangeably with training. The teacher further indicated that their training was explicitly in Mathematics. When asked about the type of workshops attended, Teacher 4 responded like this:

*“Yes, I always receive training, by the fact that she (HoD) always calls us, and show us how to teach maths, I think its part of training.”*

Then, teacher 1 supported the claim of in-house workshops by responding like this:

*“They support us number one, they support us by conducting IQMS, that’s number one, and then the other one, by organising some workshops from NG... NGO’s companies and then they also support us by doing class visits, yes, and they organise some workshops for us here around the school, even subject meetings to develop us, to develop each other as a group, that is how they develop us.”*

In support of the above claim, Teacher 3 responded like this:

*“They do workshops, let’s say there are some of the things, we don’t understand as teachers, E.G the creating of sentences on how to help children to write sentences, so during the workshop we sit down and discuss strategies on how to help children to create sentences, and we also get information from CI’s, they are helping us a lot”*

The data reveal that workshops are conducted by HoDs for different developmental needs. The data also show that these teachers are also workshopped on languages and get support from curriculum implementers. In addition, the data also show that some teachers perceive differentiation workshops as TPD.

In summary, the data above denote that all four schools conduct class visits. However, in two schools, class visits were planned and unplanned, whereas in the other two schools, HoDs conducted planned visits only. There is concurrence between data collected from interviews and the analysis of documents. During interviews, most teachers confirmed that HoDs conduct class visits; similarly the schedule for professional development revealed that indeed HoDs visit teachers in their classrooms. In all four schools, teachers did not have a problem with class visits as teachers perceived them as part of their development. The data from the interviews and documents collected reveal that class visits imply that the HoD focus on lesson observation, book evaluation, teachers’ file, as well as classroom management. From the analysed data, HoDs conducted class visits for support and compliance purposes.

The data show that HoDs follow-up class visits by conducting post-class visit support. As much as HoDs indicated that they develop teachers after class visits, one can tell that there is not much difference. However, the data show that teachers benefit through post-class visit support. Workshops, as perceived by teachers and HoDs as part of support, were held within the school. The data reveal

that teachers attend an internal and external workshop. After attending external workshops, teachers and HoDs later share acquired information with other staff members.

### **5.3.2 Theme 2: Benefits of TPD and its influence on teacher practices**

This theme sought to understand the impact and benefits of TPD on teachers' practices. Do teachers' practices improve based on the support received after the TPD? This theme is divided into three sub-themes. The first sub-theme is classroom practice, the second sub-theme is lesson plan, and the last sub-theme is teaching methodology.

#### **5.3.2.1 Classroom practice**

The purpose of this question was to understand the support provided to teachers by HoDs to enhance their classroom practice. Teachers were asked to indicate the benefit of the support they receive on classroom practices. Teacher 3 cogently posited:

*“When the HoD visits you during class visit and pick up good practices, she will call other teachers to observe the good practices, the good teacher will present the content for that day. We are also encouraged to use different strategies and not to focus on one strategy when we teach in class, we need to have different things so that when the children do not understand, then you can use second option to help children to understand”*

In this case, the HoD observed the good practice, and she involved other teachers to copy the good classroom practice. The data indicate that teachers get motivated when sharing good practice with their peers. Even though Teacher 1 was not specific on the support received on classroom practice, she acknowledged the support from the HoDs on curriculum-related issues. She responded like this:

*“I cannot say class activities but when you are having a problem with some staff in the classroom, curriculum-related issues, you can go to our HoD, and she is very supportive in that area”*

HoDs also practise the support of teachers on classroom practice, as HoD 4 reported that she conducts workshops every Tuesday to support teachers in classroom practice. In addition, HoD 2 supported the claim from HoD 4. When asked about classroom support, HoD 2 she responded like this:

*“We are conducting the workshops, to find the information on how to maintain our classrooms management, how to deal with conflicts amongst us, sometimes the department organise the workshop for us,”*

The datum shows that HoDs conduct workshops on classroom practice. This process will enable teacher classroom practice to improve.

### **5.3.2.2 How to create a lesson plan**

The second sub-theme is the creation of lesson plans. This sub-theme sought to understand the benefit of TPD on creating lesson plans. Teacher 4 reported she had a challenge of planning a lesson and her HoDs assisted her. When asked to mention one example of development received from her HoD, she responded like this:

*I had a challenge of creating a lesson plan and the setting of our mini exams. The HoD showed me someday that it should be done like this and that. She opened a book and showed us to do it according to that book, how to assess and how to plan, but most importantly the HoD suggested that we meet every Thursday afternoon, we plan together and we ended up doing one thing as teachers.*

The datum above shows that the HoD assisted teachers by consulting the policy document, as the above participant indicated that the HoD opened a book to guide them accordingly. Teacher 4 from School C perceived the creation of a lesson plan as an activity that the HoD uses to develop and support them in their professional development.

In addition, HoD 4 also supported the claim of planning together on Thursdays as teachers, she explained like this:

*“I think to us, the reason for them to drag their feet is the .....is the challenge of lesson planning, so to curb that, we have decided to plan together as the grades, so it becomes easier, each and every one of us has got a plan for the week, we plan on Thursday for the following week”.*

The above statement from the data shows that teachers feel more comfortable to work in groups or teams because they consult their peers and counterparts for assistance. In short, the HoD reported that teachers had challenges of planning lessons. However as SMT members, they came with a strategy of planning together. As the previous HoD reported, it becomes easier as each teacher has a plan for the week. The data suggest that it becomes easier for teachers to teach in the classroom after planning together as a group.

However, in School A, the data show that teachers teach without proper lesson plans. HoD 1 from school A indicated that:

*“teachers should learn to consult the policy on doing new things, they still have outdated lesson plans and claim they teach with their own/old mentality or strategy”*

From the above statement, these teachers were not inclined to new systems and new developments that emerged in the South African Curriculum.

### **5.3.2.3 Teaching methodology**

The last sub-theme that emerged from theme two is teaching methodology. Teachers perceived that PD can help them to improve or enhance their teaching methodology. In the documents collected, the data show the planned development of teachers as it appears on the schedule of TPD. Teacher 3 alluded to the training on grammar, and the focus was on sentence construction. When asked on the support provided by SMT on TPD, she responded like this:

*“They do workshops, let’s say there are some of the things, we don’t understand as teachers, E.G the creating of sentences on how to help children to write sentences, so during the workshop we sit down and discuss strategies on how to help children to create sentences, and we also get information from CI’s, they are helping us a lot”*

The data show that Teacher 3 also acknowledged the support from district officials, specifically curriculum implementers (subject advisers). It appears as if teachers received information from the curriculum implementers. As indicated earlier on, another teaching methodology that emerged from the interviews is differentiation. In most full-service schools and special schools, differentiation is commonly used as a teaching method. However, the focus was not on teaching methods, but on being trained on how to use teaching methods.

When asked about the activities facilitated by the HoD to support her TPD, Teacher 1 responded like this:

*“They facilitate differentiation, yes, teaching this different learners with different abilities, so how to teach those learners with different abilities and those with learning barriers, so they facilitate, specifically they facilitate differentiation”,*

The data show that Teacher 1 perceived the support from the HoD as being trained in teaching learners with different learning barriers as part of TPD. The collected data also indicate the difficulties of teachers in teaching these learners without proper teaching methods. HoD 1 claimed that she supports teachers and provides them with new strategies. She commented in this way:



*“I normally do class visits, and during the class visit, I request teachers to identify their areas of development. I am also able to pick up if the problem is with the learners or with the teacher. My role is to assist teachers in teaching learners with different learning barriers; I also assist teachers with intervention strategies”.*

From the above statement, it appears as if the HoD provides appropriate teaching methods for teachers as part of development.

In summary, the above data show that HoDs support teachers in different forms and regard the support process as the development of teachers. There is insufficient evidence on the support of teachers in classroom practices. The data also show that teachers had a problem of drafting lesson plans but planning together assisted them to work together with their peers. It appears as if in other schools, teachers were not supported as HoD 1 indicated that teachers used their way of teaching based on their experiences. In addition, HoDs support teachers in terms of teaching methodologies by showing them different teaching strategies, for instance the teaching of Mathematics. Teachers also expressed that HoDs assist them with subject content such as sentence construction.

### **5.3.3 Theme 3: Teachers’ perceptions on their teacher professional development**

This theme has one sub-theme. The sub-theme is teachers’ perceptions of TPD support by HoDs. This sub-theme sought to understand the perceptions of teachers towards the support they receive from their HoDs.

#### **5.3.3.1 Teachers’ perceptions on TPD support by HoDs**

The data show that teachers acknowledged class visit as an activity of teacher development. In addition, the data show that some teachers perceived unplanned class visits as policing or fault-finding rather than developmental. However, in other schools, data indicate that teachers appreciate the visits from the SMT members and regard them as part of professional development. Teacher 4 of School C appreciated the support from her HoD and remarked in this manner:

*“yes, yes.....it is very good, especially, I remember..... I once thank my HoD, that you were sent by God..... for me,yes....she is so vibrant.....she is doing everything....and ...yes....and if somewhere, somehow, maybe you are delaying or you are struggling to do something, our HoD will call all the staff members and guide us on how to do things, she always refer to policy documents. I even said to her, I have learn a lot of things from her especially those things I didn’t know. You don’t know, how wonderful she is....”*

From the above statement, the data indicate the appreciation of the HoD by the teacher on the support and the development she received from her HoD. This datum also shows that the teacher recognised

that her HoD planned the class visits with the teachers, even though she (the HoD) sometimes comes to the class unannounced. Teacher 1 also appreciated the support from her HoD; she reported that her HoD supports them on a personal level and researches information for them. When asked about the support from her HoD, she commented like this:

*“Yes, number one I can say, she supports us a lot, by organising the..... class activities, not specifically, I cannot say class activities but when you are having a problem with some staff in the classroom, curriculum-related issues, you can go to our HoD, she is very supportive in that area and then she also issue whatever we need, yes whatever we need like those programmes, assessment programmes, yes, yes she is helping us a lot.”*

Surprisingly, another teacher from the same school, Teacher 2, School A, had a different perception from Teacher 1. When asked about the support from SMT on her TPD, Teacher 2 responded:

*“NO, we don't....maybe she..... if.....you know what happens with the SMT and .....and..... and....., professionalism is lacking, because one other thing I picked up is that if they see you lacking in something they don't come to you and try to develop you, instead they will go and speak about you to someone else..you see...and then with..like..eee..., yes...that is the truth, meaning that as SMT members they still need development in saying they are not professional like that....so they need to develop themselves, because my issue is my issue.....you can't be.... if I give you my paper and I feel that is not up to standard, or it needs some whatever..whatever....come to me lets try to see.....developing..so what they do is gossip and ...talk about you.”*

Data from Teacher 2 reveal that there is a lack of proper support from the SMT members. The data also indicate that the said teacher acknowledged that people need to be developed, but SMT members need more development than teachers, especially on leadership and management. However, her HoD indicated that she uses an open door policy, whereby all teachers are welcome to discuss any issues with her.

Some teachers perceived the assistance of HoDs as helpful in their daily teaching. Teacher 3 also perceived class visits as an activity of TPD that is good and helps her a lot. When asked about class visits, she responded like this:

*“I think this class visit help a lot, the focus is not on one subject, but all the subject taught in the foundation phase, by the time they visit you, they will pick up your area where you are lacking, E.G diversity, discipline, class management, so they will use that area for IQMS to develop you as the teacher, so the class visits helps them on what to do during IQMS.”*

The data show that Teacher 3 was impressed by class visits as the focus was on all the subjects taught in the foundation phase. As indicated earlier on, foundation phase teachers are not subject specialist like other phases. The collected data indicate that foundation phase teachers need more support and development on all subjects they are teaching in the phase.

In sum, the above data denote that most teachers acknowledged the support they receive from the HoDs. In addition, teachers reported that class visits help them in different ways, in their daily classroom practice. One teacher reported that since the HoD appointment in their school, she could teach Mathematics and conduct assessments properly. The data also reveal that HoDs consult policy documents in supporting teachers. One teacher added that her HoD consults other schools for support.

#### **5.3.4 Theme 4: Support received by HoDs in implementing TPD**

This sub-theme is about the support received by HoDs from NGOs as well as departmental support.

##### ***5.3.4.1 Support from Non-Governmental Organisations***

This sub-theme sought to understand the support received by HoDs in managing TPD. Data collected reveal that teachers and HoDs received support from external sources such as NGOs to support their professional development. Since all four schools are located in one area, the data indicate the support from the same external sources. In this sub-theme, I wanted to understand the support of the NGOs to the foundation phase HoDs. When asked about any training received from the NGOs, HoD 1 responded like this:

*We attended a workshop by KST (Kagiso shanduka trust) that is organised by local mining companies and the focus was on teamwork, classroom practice as well as how to teach children*

The data show the support of private companies and the purpose of training. HoD 2 reported that she had not yet attended any training from NGOs, but she indicated that the training would resume the following year. The HoD added that the company outlined the purpose of training. When asked about the training she attended, she responded in this manner:

*No, we didn't, we have class act (class act is an external source that is in collaboration with DoE), which will start next year, they did introduction, on lesson presentation, lesson on the tablet, visual teaching*

From the data collected on the biographies and HoDs' experience, the collected data show that the above HoD 2 was newly appointed at the school, she had six months' experience as HoD and two

years' teaching experience at this school, School B. HoD 3 from the same school also supported HoD 2 that there was no training from the NGOs. Data show that HoD 3 was also newly appointed as HoD. However, she had six years of teaching experience at the same school, in the foundation phase. It appears as if the NGO had not yet conducted any training in School B.

In School C, both HoDs were asked about the support or training received from the NGOs. HoD 4 responded like this:

*Yes....., we have started this one of leadership with the KST, the Anglo American, those are the ones that are doing it very well for us*

The data show that like School A, School C also received training from KST. However, the focus was on leadership and management. The data also show that the company still has plans to train School C HoDs on curriculum issues. HoD 4 supported the latter statement by responding like this:

*Yes, we are supposed to start more of the modules on curriculum management and we do have a programme to say it will be starting soon*

From the above statement, it appears as if there are modules that are already completed, and the company will add more modules on curriculum management. HoD 5 from the same school was newly appointed and responded like this:

*Anglo.... did train us, even the SASAMS (SA school administration and management system)....Anglo did train us.*

The above data indicate that HoD 5 agreed with HoD 4 that Anglo company trained HoDs on management. The above two HoDs were from the same school, School C. In school D, HoD 6 also reported about the promises of the Anglo company in this manner:

*Anglo company has trained us on general and social issues but they already conducted a meeting with us and promised to train us and teachers on curriculum and management issues. They have already sent coaches to our school, the coaches will assist us on drafting lesson preparations and they also indicated that, they will provide each teacher with a tablet or IPAD that will be loaded with a lot of information pertaining curriculum management*

The data show the commitment of the company by sending coaches to the school before the actual training. From the interviews, the senior teacher of school D did not say much about the training from NGOs. It appeared strange that teachers had not yet attended training with the external source, but the meeting was already conducted between the school and the external source.

When asked about support or training from NGOs, Teacher 4 responded like this:

*We are trained by the company called KST (Kagiso Trust). Sometimes we become confused because the NGO will come and train us and also instruct us to implement what we were trained on. The following week, CI will come, as they check our work they will make negative comments about the method of teaching received from NGO. When we indicate to them that we attended training with NGOs, the CI's will fight with us and indicate that they gave us a policy about how and what to teach. At the end of the day, we will discover that both CI's and NGO are speaking different languages.*

The data from Teacher 4 reveal that even though NGOs train and workshop them, sometimes the support is confusing, especially when the CI comments that teachers should focus on the policy and not on the training and workshops by NGOs. It appears as if there is no proper communication between the DoE and NGOs.

#### **5.3.4.2 Support from the DoE**

The last sub-theme that emerged from the interviews is external support received by HoDs in implementing TPD from the circuit, district and provincial offices. This sub-theme sought to understand the level of support provided by external stakeholders, as indicated above.

HoDs were asked about the training they received from the DoE to enable them to support foundation phase teachers. When asked about the training received from the DBE, HoD 1 responded like this:

*We are attending maybe twice per term and we attends according to grades. The training was focusing on curriculum issues only. However, since this term has started, we have not attended any training as yet. Since I was appointed as foundation phase HoD, I have not attended any training on leadership and management.*

The above response from HoD 1 indicates that teachers and HoDs attend curriculum management workshops. However, the HoD had not yet attended training on leadership and management since she was appointed as HoD in 2014. One could tell that the department is lacking in developing HoDs on leadership and management. From the data, HoD 2 and 3 from School B were both appointed as HoDs in June 2019, and they were never trained on leadership and management. However, HoD 2 indicated that she attended curriculum management training and the focus was on English and Maths. HoD 2 further added that curriculum implementers conducted the training. HoD 3 never attended a curriculum management meeting. When asked about the training from the DBE, HoD 3 reacted like this:

*No, I have not receive any training from the department, I managed through the principal and other colleagues, I am also relying on my management qualifications in BED, and I also use Utube to get more information, because you listen to someone classifying and unpacking that particular topic that you are struggling with*

As indicated earlier on the description of the sample, the two HoDs above were from the same school, School B, but they reported at different phases. HoD 2 was responsible for foundation phase and HoD 3 was responsible for intermediate and senior phases. Hence HoD 3 reported that she did not attend any training. This HoD was interviewed based on her experience in the foundation phase as a teacher.

In School C, HoD 5 was also newly appointed like HoDs 2 and 3. HoD 5 shared a similar sentiment by indicating that she did not receive any training from the DBE. When asked about the training she attended from the DBE, HoD 5 replied in this manner:

*no...we still waiting for the date, they said they are coming.....they are coming.....for you..... Because strictly we want to know our duty, we don't want to do the duty that is not ours, yes....we want strictly our duty, because you know when we come to.....when we are new, sometimes they use to..... give you the job that is not yours.....type this.....do this.....and you know that is not my job....but.....we are not sure.....we want strictly the job for HoDs...*

The data above show that HoDs 2, 3 and 5 were not trained, whether on curriculum management or leadership and management. It appears as if HoD 5 was assigned with the responsibilities that she was not trained for because she emphatically indicated that she wanted to execute the role of HoD. Further, she categorically indicated that she wanted to be trained on her roles and responsibilities.

The data show that HoD 4 only attended an induction after her appointment as HoD in 2014. She indicated that the induction focused on the post and pre-moderation processes. She further explained the process in this way:

*Hhhh...it was all about a.....that we must pre-moderate the scripts, do post moderation*

However, the data indicate that the HoD 4 also attended the training on curriculum management; she reported that there was a lot of training on curriculum management. It appears as if training on management is very unusual, as indicated earlier on. HoD 6 was also asked about the training received from the DBE, HoD 6 responded like this:

*No, I received the training, the second year after I was appointed (1997), we went to Nelspruit at Kruger National park, we were empowered, it was about*

*leadership and management, since then, there is no motivation or training, there is zero support from the department,*

The above data show that HoD 6 was appointed in 1995 and attended training in 1997. HoD 6 reported that she attended the training on leadership and management and after that, she was never trained or developed. It also appears that HoD 6 did not attend any curriculum management training. Similarly, the senior teacher of School D attested that she never attended any training since she became the senior teacher to date. She further indicated that she depends on HoD 6 for new teaching methods, curriculum management, as well as leadership and management.

In summary, one could tell from the data collected that HoDs never received support for implementing TPD in schools. In addition, the data show that they [HoDs] benefited from the curriculum workshops as teachers of the foundation phase but not as foundation phase HoDs. The DoE has a section that deals with teacher development. NGOs working in partnership with the DoE play a role in supporting and developing teachers. The data show that in these schools, NGOs support teachers through workshops and the focus is both on curriculum and management development.

## **5.4 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

The data collected from the School Improvement Plans, Subject Improvement Plans and Schedule for Teacher Professional Development were subjected to content analysis.

### **5.4.1 School improvement plan**

The school improvement plan for 2019-2021 of School A consisted of an action plan for curriculum management and a development plan. This action plan consisted of five priority areas namely, a) languages: writing; reading and speaking; b) numeracy, Mathematics, Science and Technology; c) inclusive education; d) staff development; e) school health and safety. There is also a stand-alone item, namely: training on how to incorporate multimedia into teaching and learning. This SIP also includes a three-year strategic plan with two objectives namely: a) to recognise and develop the curriculum along the lines of literacy and numeracy; b) to render a better and improved service in inclusive education.

The school identified priority number 4 for staff development. The steps to be taken for this item are the training of educators, and the desired outcome is knowledgeable and informed competent and skilful staff. The responsible groups to train educators are SMT members and curriculum implementers. However, the plan is unclear on the specific areas of training for educators, when

(date and time) are they planning to train educators and the targeted educators to be trained based on the findings from the class visits. The three-year strategic plan under the first objective indicates that by the end of June 2019, learners should be able to read fluently and write competently. However, during the interviews, HoD 1 reported that their learners were struggling with reading and writing in their languages. This suggests that the SIP had just been developed for the sake of compliance than addressing the challenges of the school.

The school improvement plan for 2019 of school B consisted of nine areas of development. Their description of activities or intervention programmes are: a) Basic functionality; b) Governance and relationships; c) school infrastructure; d) Quality teaching and learning and educator development; e) Curriculum provision and resources; f) Learner achievement; g) Parents and community; h) leadership management and communication; i) School safety, security and discipline.

An area of development that includes quality teaching and learning and educator development has the following description of activities: a) remedial classes; b) create reading corners; introduce demerits and merit system and be posted on the walls; c) lesson templates for LO and creative arts will be redesigned to add a section for expanded opportunities; d) design worksheets for excursions. All the captured activities excluded educator development as an identified area of improvement. There is no clear indication on the SIP on how educators are developed to be better educators, as suggested by the schools' area of development.

The school improvement plan for 2019 of School C consisted of nine areas of development and their objective activities. The areas of development are the same as the areas of development of School B. My focus was on the areas of improvement that involve teacher development. The two areas of development are a) Quality teaching and learning b) leadership, management and communication. The school indicated under quality teaching that the SMT will conduct workshops on teaching strategies. On the leadership, management and communication, SMT members organise classroom management workshops for teachers.

The school improvement plan for 2019 of School D consisted of nine areas of development and their objective activities. The areas of development are the same as the areas of development of School B and School C. I will focus on the areas of development that involve teacher development. The two areas of development are a) Quality of teaching and teachers' development b) leadership, management and communication. The strategies or activities for improvement recorded on the plan under quality teaching and teacher development include class visits, IQMS and book views. In the



same breath, the strategies for leadership, management and communication include letters, teachers and learners. The plan is silent on how to address the challenges of leadership, management and communication. This suggests that this plan was submitted for compliance purposes and not to address the challenges of the school.

#### **5.4.2 Subject improvement plan**

All the schools submitted their subject improvement plans, except for School A. This school only submitted the school improvement plan. School B submitted a school improvement plan for English Home Language, Grade 2. The subject improvement plan for 2019 of School B consisted of four identified areas, strategies, activities to address the challenge as well as the responsible person. The four identified areas are as follows: a) phonics; b) reading; c) spelling ;d) sentence building.

School C submitted the subject improvement plan for IsiZulu Home Language, Grade 3. The plan consisted of four topics or content, namely: a) phonics; b) writing; c) spelling; d) grammar. The plan has an intervention strategy; in all strategies, nothing is specific about diversity.

The subject improvement plan for 2019 of School D consisted of four priority areas of performance namely: a) lesson planning by teachers in languages is poor; b) late coming; c) time frame; d) discipline. All the priority areas had nothing to do with subject improvement. I submit that the school was confusing the subject improvement plan with the school improvement plan. This suggests the lack of support from the district and circuit. As both the HoD 6 and the senior teacher reported in their interviews that they lack support from the district, the submitted documents were a self-fulfilling prophecy. As indicated earlier on with other schools, this also suggests that schools complete all the plans for compliance purposes only.

#### **5.4.3 Schedule for teacher professional development**

School B submitted a template for classroom support. The template consisted of the name of the supported teacher, the grade and subject, the date for submission and the date of class visits. However, the template did not include documents submitted as well as the purpose of class visits.

The schedule for professional development for School C is termed curriculum management schedule. The schedule has four indicators namely: a) Educators' name; b) Grade; c) date for the control of educators' file and learners' books; d) date for classroom support visit; e) subjects taught in the

foundation phase. The schedule has dates for classroom support visits. However, it is unclear about the purpose of the class visits. The schedule has signatures for all the teachers visited, as well as HoDs and the school principal's signature with the school stamp.

The schedule for professional development for School D is termed 'submission and class support programme'. The programme consisted of six indicators, namely: Grade, date, activity, done, not done, new date. Under the indicator of activity, the following activities are indicated: phase meeting, submission of teachers' workbooks and learners' books, assessment, classroom support, trips and examination. The programme is unclear about the purpose of submitting teachers' workbooks and learners' books. Again, classroom support is noted, but there is no clear indication on the kinds of support to be conducted and the purpose of the classroom support. The data collected suggest that the plan is available at the school for compliance purposes only.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

This study shows that activities that are provided by HoDs to support TPD are class visits, post-class visits and workshops. These activities benefit teachers on classroom practice, lesson planning and teaching methodologies. Teachers perceived the excellent support from their HoDs. Additionally, teachers agreed to both planned and unplanned class visits. The data also reveal that both HoDs and external sources provide workshops to teachers. This study also shows the support received by SMT members from NGOs and the DoE. During the interviews, the teacher from School C indicated that previously they had a challenge of managing the overcrowded classrooms. This suggests that the workshop on classroom management has helped to curb this challenge. There is a secure integration between the school SIP and the data collected during the interviews. The school has clearly indicated under quality teaching that the SMT will conduct workshops on teaching strategies, which was supported by Teacher 4 during the interviews that her HoD always trains them in Mathematics. Teacher 3, in her response, indicated that teachers are developed on sentence construction; thus there is a connection between data collected through interviews and the subject improvement plan.

During the interviews, HoD 4 of School C reported that there is diversity in their classroom. She added that teachers focus only on learners that tend to do well in class. There is no connection between the subject improvement plan and the data collected during the interviews. In the schedule of teacher development for School B and during interviews, the teacher reported about the term class visits as indicated on the template. In the teacher development schedule for School C, there is a

connection between the data collected during the interviews and the schedule received from the school. All the participants from School C reported that the schedule for class visits is available and signed by all parties. Notably in School D, none of the participants reported about such activities during the interviews.

The next chapter will dwell on the discussions and conclusion of this study.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore how HoDs in the foundation phase manage and support teacher professional development for foundation phase teachers. This chapter discusses the summary of findings, recommendations, limitations of the study, suggestions for future research, and conclusion.

#### 6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study pursued the following research questions:

How do the foundation phase HoDs of the Mpumalanga Province manage and support teacher professional development? The sub-questions were: (a) What activities of teacher professional development do HoDs engage in to support foundation phase teachers? (b) What are the benefits of teacher professional development and its influence on teacher practices? (c) How do teachers perceive the support of their TPD by these HoDs? (d) What kind of support do these HoDs receive in order to be able to manage TPD in this phase?

Following is the summary of the findings presented in themes that were drawn from the data concerning these questions.

##### **6.2.1 Theme 1: What activities of teacher professional development do HoDs engage in to support foundation phase teachers?**

The first theme considered teachers' opinions about the activities of TPD they receive in the foundation phase.

Teachers identified different activities of TPD, such as workshops and class visits. According to Mtanga (2016:51), "Class visit takes place when the principal or a member of the SMT goes to a classroom during contact time to assess how teaching and learning take place." The findings indicate that teachers acknowledged that their foundation phase HoDs conducted class visits. Teachers regarded the class visit as an activity that supports them in their professional development. Teachers added that they received immediate training or support after class visits. Out of five teachers

interviewed, four teachers agreed that HoDs conducted class visits and trained or supported them immediately after the class visits as well as the following day.

This support differs from school to school. In some schools, the HoDs provided group support, and in other schools, the HoDs offered one-on-one support to teachers. Secondly, both teachers and SMT members planned the class visit. In school C, teachers even indicated by signing the class visits forms. HoDs conducted class visits for different purposes. HoD 5 reported that she conducts class visits to check if learners' books are marked, and to give feedback to learners. However, the findings do not show whether the class visit has an impact on teacher development or not. There was no observation made by me on the support provided to teachers by HoDs after the class visits.

The data indicate that HoDs, curriculum implementers and NGOs conduct workshops to support teachers. Most of the workshops focused on curriculum management. It was clear from the collected data that teachers share with other teachers after attending the departmental workshop. The data also indicate that HoDs benefit from different workshops by curriculum implementers and NGOs. However, most workshops focused on curriculum management than leadership and management. The data also shows a lack of support on the workshops based on leadership and management to support HoDs.

### **6.2.2 Theme 2: What are the benefits of teacher professional development and its influence on teacher practices?**

The second theme reflected that teachers' classroom practice, lesson plan and teaching methodology has improved due to TPD. Teachers benefit from the support they receive in classroom practice, lesson plan sittings and teaching methodology.

The participants in this study referred to the drafting of a lesson plan in one sitting as helpful. In one school, teachers planned their lesson together on a specific day. Teachers also noted the support they receive from the HoDs on the classroom practice and how HoDs share the good practices with other teachers. Lesson presentation was used in sharing good practices concerning classroom practice. One participant acknowledged the support received in teaching methodologies, specifically in Mathematics

### **6.2.3 Theme 3: How do teachers perceive the support of their TPD by these HoDs?**

The third theme looked at how teachers perceived the TPD offered to them by HoDs. Apart from class visits as an activity of TPD, this theme sought to understand the perception of teachers on their

general development by HoDs. Teachers perceived their professional development positively. The findings show that the support was excellent, and the teachers appreciated it. Teacher 4 reported that her HoD is so helpful, and she has taught her new methods and strategies of teaching in the foundation phase. The teacher also added that she told the HoD that her presence in their school was beneficial. The findings also revealed that HoDs receive positive feedback from the teachers.

Even though the findings reveal a lack of support from the DoE for the departmental heads, teachers perceived their HoDs as excellent researchers in how they consult other schools for more information. Teacher 4 supported the statement of research as she reported that her HoD always talks about the policy and always opens the policy document when supporting the teachers. It is good to note that HoDs consult the policy as their guiding document to support teachers. The policy document is the teachers' legal framework. These HoDs try hard to fulfil their roles and responsibilities despite the lack of support from the DoE.

#### **6.2.3 Theme 4: What kinds of support do these HoDs receive in order to be able to manage TPD in this phase?**

The last theme regarded the absence of support for HoDs as the challenge for the proper implementation of TPD. Teachers and HoDs attend workshops organised by both the DoE and NGOs. However, the workshops address the curriculum implementation and not the leadership for catering to the HoDs.

The study reveals that teachers and HoDs attend workshops conducted by the curriculum implementers. However, both participants did not dwell much on the training and its implications. In general, HoDs depend more on the policy as well as consultations with other schools. There was clear evidence from the study that HoDs lack support in their leadership roles. The task of provincial and district officials is to develop the capacity among school leaders and maintain an effective system of in-school professional development (DBE, 2012).

### **6.3 SUMMARY**

It is apparent from the data that teachers perceived class visits, workshops, post-class visits as the support they receive from their HoDs. The study reveals that class visits by HoDs imply that HoDs are managing and monitoring teaching and learning. In addition, teachers acknowledged the hard work from their HoDs on curriculum implementation as they support them with teaching

methodologies. However, there was no training from the DoE in supporting HoDs in their leadership and management.

#### **6.4 LOCATING THE FINDINGS WITHIN THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

The teacher professional activities that are located in the literature review of this study are as follows: workshops, the roles and responsibilities of HoDs, lesson observation, class visits, as well as in-school support. Literature reveals that professional development includes on-going workshops, reflection, and observation that accommodates teachers as learners to improve their practice as professionals (Morake, 2014). In this study, teachers and HoDs reported that they attended workshops organised by both the DoE and NGOs, respectively.

This study reveals that the workshops focus more on curriculum implementation. This is in line with the assertion by Heystek, Nieman, Van Rooyen, Mosoge and Bipath (2008:166) that: “Professional support has the potential of improving individual performance as well as the culture of the school, by bringing educators together and binding them in a common purpose.” Most participants in this study agreed that they attended the workshops wherein they were trained for a common purpose. However, the findings in this study reveal that the days of training or workshops were insufficient. Literature reveals that many teachers require development and support, and it is clear that short courses in the order of 3-5 days have a negligible impact (Taylor, 2008). There is little evidence on workshops conducted to support HoDs on management and leadership.

The roles and responsibilities of teachers and SMT members found in the PAM document (DBE, 2016). HoDs are required to “control the work of educators and learners in the department, and to monitor and evaluate the performance of educators” (ELRC, 2008: 46). In this study, HoDs monitored class visits and learners’ exercise books, respectively. Documents analysed revealed the schedule of class visits and checking of learner’s books by SMT members. Even though teachers perceived class visits and book reviews as support, it was clear that the activities were conducted for monitoring purposes. Literature reveals that SMT members in schools regard class visits as part of monitoring instruction (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2014).

A recurring theme was the desire of the participants, especially HoDs, to receive induction after their appointment as SMT members. Furthermore, the same participants expected to be trained and workshopped on leadership and management by the DoE officials. Another theme that emerged was the support received by teachers after the class visit and post-class visit support conducted by HoDs. Participants also expressed the support received from the NGOs. However, one participant

reported feeling confused that the support received from curriculum implementers seemed to be with the support received from NGOs.

The most significant noticeable conclusions emerging from the South African literature (Mohlala, 2010; Narsee, 2006: 224; Mahlo, 2011) is that district officials are not skilled to provide professional support to schools due to the absence of a clear sense of their role and the lack of follow-up and follow-through. Similarly, studies by Ramolefe (2004); Mashau et al. (2008); Masango (2013) and Sivhabu (2002) report that teachers in South Africa do not receive sufficient support within schools because most principals and HoDs are unfamiliar with the new curriculum and do not have the relevant skills required for problem-solving, networking and communication. It is evident from the findings in this study that support from HoDs is available but inadequate. Additionally, the evidence on the lack of support for HoDs from the district and provincial officials is apparent.

## **6.5 DISCUSSION**

The participants identified curriculum implementers and NGOs as the external sources of support for foundation phase teachers and HoDs. One participant, Teacher 4, reported that there was no proper communication between curriculum implementers and NGOs. The same participant indicated that, in some instances, the support was inadequate or confusing. This is due to perceived incompetence on the part of the sources of support or a shortage of sources of support. The alleged ineffectiveness of sources of support aligns with findings from studies by Mohlala (2010) and Narsee (2006: 224) which revealed that most officials from the district offices were not skilled to provide professional support to teachers in schools.

Despite trepidations raised by participants, some indicated that they found value in the support provided by external sources. This finding is consistent with a study by De Clercq and Shalem (2014: 133) who reported that the “workshops provide a broad orientation about the meaning of the curriculum, its new terms and directives, subject matter knowledge and preferred ways of teaching it (such as integration of school and everyday knowledge) as well as curriculum sequencing and pacing”. Participants indicated that external support was provided during offsite workshops only. However, participants reported that there was no external support for HoDs about leadership and management. HoDs emerged as the critical source of within-school support for foundation phase teachers.

Heads of departments support emerged as a form of in-school support that was confidently regarded and experienced through teachers as participants and research sites. Participants acknowledged that



the strength of HoDs is owed to the fact that HoDs permit teachers to share information on specific topics, lesson presentations, lesson preparations, and the use of dissimilar teaching approaches to overcome the challenges in their different classroom practices. This finding is consistent with that reported in previous studies (Gaible & Burns, 2007), which indicates that in open classroom observation, teachers create lessons and invite colleagues to observe the lesson and copy good practices. Additionally, Leithwood (2016:122) asserted, “Heads of departments bring different perspectives to school decisions by virtue of their subject or discipline specialisations”.

Although the participants indicated positive views about support from their HoDs, it emerged from this study that internal support has its challenges. A recurring theme across the participant groups and research sites was learner discipline, overcrowding, and lack of ICT knowledge by teachers. Another challenge was the lack of training for HoDs by the DoE, specifically on leadership and management. It emerged from the data that HoDs support teachers based on the support received from other schools. The fact that HoDs may have expert knowledge in supervision and monitoring of one or two specific areas, is concerning as they have to support or guide teachers in areas in which they are not well versed.

## **6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations of this study are in line with the findings and the research questions that underpinned this research. Key findings of this study included misperceptions about the meaning of professional development with post-class visits; non-availability of programmes for professional development, and conducting class visits for compliance purposes and not for the development of teachers. Concerns were raised about the lack of collaboration between the DoE and NGOs. Lastly, the non-availability of HoDs’ training from the DoE on leadership and management was concerning.

It is recommended that workshops conducted by NGOs be in line with the DoE policies for curriculum management. The purpose of workshops for school teachers and SMT members by both DoE and NGOs should be clearly defined. It is also recommended that class visits be scheduled with a specific purpose in mind. An exhortation that emerged from the data was that HoDs use class visits to monitor compliance with policies. It is, therefore, recommended for the DBE to make a clear distinction between support and monitoring for teachers in schools. Furthermore, the DBE should review the induction of newly appointed SMT members and review the training of SMT members at

least quarterly. Since HoDs emerged as critical internal sources of teacher support, a rigid training for HoDs on leadership and management is recommended.

## **6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY'S FINDINGS**

The study was conducted in four primary schools in a South African education district with a sample of 12 participants, namely, five post – level 1 teachers, six foundation phase HoDs and one intermediate and senior phase departmental head. The focus of the study was to interview only foundation phase HoDs, but due to unforeseen circumstances, the Intersen HoD was interviewed. Interviewing the Intersen departmental head did not affect the study. This was evidently a limited target population that did not represent all the schools in the circuit, province or country.

Based on the small sample size, the inferences drawn from the study make it difficult to generalise the findings beyond the four schools in which the study was conducted. It is left to the reader to decide on the relevance of the findings of this study to their particular settings. Further, the study focused on the views of primary school teachers and HoDs, predominantly foundation phase and did not include the views of external sources of support such as curriculum implementers, circuit managers, district and provincial officials as well as NGOs. Nevertheless, I did everything possible to ensure that the study findings are trustworthy.

## **6.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

For further research, I suggest the following areas be explored: Further investigation of this research topic is essential on a larger sample to provide greater insight into the topic.

A similar study needs to be conducted to solicit the views of the district officials, circuit managers, NGOs and curriculum implementers (subject advisers) who provide external support to educators and HoDs in schools. The views of these stakeholders will add value in the quest to find solutions for supporting foundation phase HoDs in light of managing and supporting foundation teachers in their professional development.

Lastly, since the element of the absence of support for HoDs resurfaced in several studies, including this study, a comprehensive study is essential to explore how newly appointed or promoted HoDs in the foundation phase experience support in the absence of a national induction programme. Furthermore, a clearly defined support structure for HoDs in public schools in South Africa is

essential. The Mpumalanga Department of Education should support HoDs on their roles and responsibilities. Inductions for the newly appointed SMT members are imperative.

## **6.9 CONTRIBUTION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE**

This study contributes to the body of existing knowledge by uncovering limited internal and external support for both teachers and HoDs. The expected support is aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools, specifically the foundation phase. The foundation phase HoDs' expectations in contrast to what they receive have the potential to improve the quality of teaching in the foundation phase.

This study contributes to the body of existing knowledge by highlighting that foundation phase HoDs who participated in this study, felt they were not fully supported by departmental officials in their leadership and management duties.

The study also contributed to new knowledge by revealing that HoDs rely solely and depend on NGOs for their leadership and management support. Training on leadership and management for SMT members in schools was only conducted by NGO's.

In addition, the study contributes to the body of existing knowledge by highlighting that foundation phase teachers who participated in this study, felt like the support they receive in terms of curriculum delivery is limited to their foundation phase HoDs as well as NGOs.

The study also contributes to the body of existing knowledge by highlighting that, foundation phase teachers felt that unplanned class visits were about policing and fault-finding. However, other teachers felt that unplanned class visits were for developmental purposes.

The study also contributes to the new body of knowledge by highlighting that, the foundation phase teachers and HoDs felt that there was no proper communication between NGOs and the Department of Education (DoE) officials.

Lastly, this study contributed to the body of existing knowledge by revealing that HoDs have limited time and resources in supporting foundation teachers because they are also full-time teachers in their schools.

## **6.10 CONCLUSION**

Literature suggests that educator support is a challenge throughout the education system in South Africa. The problem of HoDs' support in South Africa is aggravated by the lack of critical orientation programmes to introduce newly appointed HoDs into the world of leadership and management. As a result, newly appointed HoDs begin their management roles and responsibilities with no solid support base, as they are required to navigate their way into the management system and consequently spend their entire leadership roles with no clearly defined support. The situation becomes complex owing to the non-existence of systematic support in the form of training, workshops and mentoring of HoDs by external sources such as circuits, district and provincial officials.

An operative accountability system for both internal and external sources to provide quality support to teachers and HoDs in schools is also lacking. Support for teachers and HoDs in South Africa seems to be assumed as 'monitoring'. There is a need to separate 'monitoring' and 'support' so that more onsite support can be provided to teachers and HoDs in schools. Unless school-based support is reinforced, there is a slight expectation that primary school teachers and HoDs will succeed in their attempt to provide quality teaching capable of improving learner performance.

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## APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL



### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2019/09/11

Ref: **2019/09/11/32386931/23/MC**

Name: Mrs MMB Nkabinde

Student No.: 32386931

Dear Mrs Nkabinde

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2019/09/11 to 2024/09/11

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mrs MMB Nkabinde  
E-mail address: 32386931@mylife.unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +263 77 391 9807

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Dr TS Mkhwanazi  
E-mail address: mkhwats@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27 12 352 4166

#### Title of research:

**Managing teacher professional development: A case study of foundation phase  
HODs in Mpumalanga Province**

**Qualification:** D. Ed in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/09/11 to 2024/09/11.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2019/09/11 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2024/09/11**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2019/09/11/32386931/23/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Prof AT Motlhabane**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



**Prof RM Sebate**  
**ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### Face-to-face Semi-Structured Interview with HoDs

**Interviewer: Nkabinde MMB**

**Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_**

#### Potential Questions:

1. When did you start your career as a teacher and HoD? How many years of teaching do you have in the foundation phase? Did you previously teach all the grades in the foundation phase?
2. How do SMT of this school support its teachers in their professional development?
3. What role do you play in their professional development? What activities do you facilitate for them?
4. What roles and responsibilities do you play as HoD to create a culture of teaching in this school?
5. How do you empower and support your teachers to enhance their daily classroom practices?
6. What challenges do you face in supporting your teachers in their classroom practices?
7. As HoD, did you receive any training from the Department? If yes, how many trainings do you attend in a year? Was the training for curriculum implementation or for leadership and management?
8. Did you receive any training from NGO or private companies? Please share their content briefly with me.
9. Apart from IQMS, how do you normally conduct class visits, in order to identify teachers' training or professional development needs?
10. How do you plan for class visits? What is the reaction of teachers towards unplanned class visits?

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### Face-to-face Semi-Structured Interview with Teachers

##### Potential Questions:

1. When did you start your career as a teacher, how many years of teaching do you have in the foundation phase? Did you previously teach all the grades in the foundation phase?
2. How do SMT of this school support its teachers in their professional development?
3. What roles do your foundation phase HoD play in your professional development? What PD activities do they facilitate for you?
4. What roles and responsibilities do your HoD play to create a culture of teaching in this school?
5. What forms of support do you get from your SMT to help you enhance your classroom practices?
6. What challenges do your SMT have in supporting you in your classroom practices? How can they address these challenges?
7. As a teacher, did you receive any training from your HoD or any other member of SMT? If yes, how many training do you attend in a year?
8. Did you receive any training from NGO or private companies? Please share their content with me.
9. Apart from IQMS, how do SMT conduct class visits, in order to identify teachers' training or professional development needs?
10. How do the SMT plan the class visit? What is the reaction of teachers towards unplanned class visits?

## APPENDIX D: TURNITIN REPORT

managing teacher professional development: a case study of  
foundation phase HoDs in Mpumalanga Province

### ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>34%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>23%</b>
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## APPENDIX E: EDITING LETTER



28 January 2020

### DECLARATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDIT

I declare that I have edited and proofread the Doctor of Philosophy in Education Thesis entitled: **MANAGING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF FOUNDATION PHASE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS IN MPUMALANGA PROVINCE** by Ms MMB Mashiane-Nkabinde.

My involvement was restricted to language editing: contextual spelling, grammar, punctuation, unclear antecedent, wordiness, vocabulary enhancement, sentence structure and style, proofreading, sentence completeness, sentence rewriting, consistency, referencing style, editing of headings and captions. I did not do structural re-writing of the content. Kindly note that the manuscript was formatted as per agreement with the client.

No responsibility is taken for any occurrences of plagiarism, which may not be obvious to the editor. The client is responsible for ensuring that all sources are listed in the reference list/bibliography. The editor is not accountable for any changes made to this document by the author or any other party subsequent to my edit. The client is responsible for the quality and accuracy of the final submission/publication.

Sincerely,

Professional  
**EDITORS**  
Guild

**Pholile Zengele**  
Associate Member

Membership number: ZEN001  
Membership year: March 2019 to February 2020

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